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SOME PECULIARITIES OF SPEECH IN MISSISSIPPI

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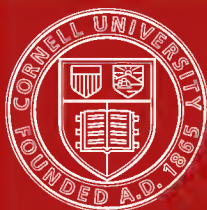
H. A. SHANDS, A.M.

FELLOW IN ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI



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PREFACE.

IN this paper, written as a thesis for procuring the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Mississippi, my object is to collect, and as far as possible to explain, those dialect words and phrases that are peculiar to, or very common in, the State of Mississippi.

Many difficulties present themselves at the outset. No previous study of this special subject has, within the knowledge of the writer, been made, so that completeness is almost a matter of impossibility. The writer must depend upon the conversation of those with whom he is thrown, for whatever specimens of dialect he secures, and consequently must fall far short of obtaining all, or even a majority, of the dialectical peculiarities of his section.

The derivation of nearly every colloquial expression is doubtful, and must be, for the most part, simply conjectural. In many instances, words have been so warped from their original forms and meanings, that even a guess at their origin is hazardous; but, on the other hand, a few readily disclose to the careful observer the various changes that occurred before they reached their present form in colloquial speech.

In the discussion that follows, I have omitted those words and expressions that have been introduced into Mississippi by foreign immigrants, for the reason that the same peculiarities have been made known by them to every other portion of the United States. And while it doubtless would be interesting to discuss such additions to our speech, still they could in nowise be said to pertain especially to Mississippi.

I have thought it best to leave out also the majority of the provincialisms that are noted as common by Bartlett or other lexicographers. As it is the object of this paper to give evidence of

original research, it seems to me useless to repeat accounts already given by the dictionary-makers.

I have endeavored to exclude purely slang phrases, such as, "to get on his ear," "I should smile," "on it," "in it," etc. Such phrases as are consciously used by the speaker as slang, I do not regard as a part of the dialect of the State, and hence desire to give them no place in this paper. However, it is very difficult to always determine just what expressions are slang and what are not, so that I may have erred both in excluding some and in including others.

In treating the dialect of the State, I have tried to distinguish three constituent elements, — the cultivated white, the illiterate white, and the negro dialects. Of course, all three have many words in common, still they are in many respects essentially distinct; and, in treating each word separately, I have taken especial care to indicate by what class of people it is used. Where no class is named, it is to be understood that the word is used by all.

The phonetic system employed is that of the American Dialect Society: all words enclosed in parentheses are spelled according to that system.

In preparing this treatise, I have consulted Bartlett's "Dictionary of Americanisms," Earle's "Philology of the English Tongue," Cook's "Sievers' Grammar of Old English," Sweet's "History of English Sounds," and the standard dictionaries of the language.

It now remains only for me to express my thanks to the writers in "Dialect Notes," from whom I have ventured to take a great deal of assistance in the way of words treated and comparisons suggested. I also owe and hereby acknowledge gratitude to several friends in the State who have been so kind as to furnish me with lists of words in their neighborhoods. And most of all do I thank my highly esteemed and learned teacher, Rev. William Rice Sims, Ph.D., who has so kindly assisted me by his valuable suggestions and scholarly advice, and Professor H. Schmidt-Wartenberg, Ph.D., Professor of Modern Languages in this University, who has assisted me in my work by useful notes and revision.

H. A. S.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI,
March 1, 1893.

SOME PECULIARITIES OF SPEECH IN MISSISSIPPI.



GENERAL DISCUSSION OF VOWEL AND CONSONANT SOUNDS.

IN discussing the vowel changes, I shall pay attention to the sounds rather than to the individual letters; since, in the English language, so many different vowels represent the same sound, and so many sounds are represented by one vowel, that in some instances it is impossible to determine just which letter should be written.

In both the vowel and consonant changes there are many isolated examples that cannot possibly be brought under any general rule, — changes that may have been developed through forms now unhappily lost, or that may have originated from analogy with some other word, not readily ascertained. Some of these changes seem to be mere caprices of the language; and being unable to explain them, I do not, in the majority of instances, attempt it.

However, before proceeding to the detailed discussion of these several changes, I feel that I ought to call attention to the fact that the dialect of the illiterate whites of the extreme backwoods districts possesses a characteristic that cannot be adequately represented by written characters, — a kind of drawling nasal twang. This can be fully understood and appreciated only by hearing this class of people talk.

The enclosing of a word or letter in parentheses indicates that it is to be spelled or pronounced according to the phonetic system of the American Dialect Society.

A (a).

§ 1. a) When final, this *a* is pronounced by negroes and illiterate whites, as short *i*; as, (Lindi) for *Linda*, (Mairi) for *Mira*, (Minisoti) for *Minnesota*, (sôfi) for *sofa*, (sôdi) for *soda*, — an example of the weakening of the strong vowels that has already played so prominent a part in the history of our language.

b) This vowel (a), when coming after the palatals *c* and *g*, is changed into *ia* or *ya*; as, *gyården* for *garden*, *cyår* for *car*, *cyårpet* for *carpet*, *gyårdeen* for *guardian*. This usage is most common among the illiterate, but is prevalent also among the immigrants from Virginia and South Carolina, whatever may be their education.

This is akin to the usual effect of the palatals on this vowel in Anglo-Saxon: "the palatal semi-vowel *j*, when beginning a word, unites with the vowels *a*, *æ*, *o*, to form *gea* and *geo*. . . . The palatals *g*, *c*, and *sc* have a similar effect." — SIEVERS, pp. 38, 39; §§ 74, 75.

The change of *a* into *ya* under these circumstances is also a cockney pronunciation, and was very common in England about a century ago, according to the best orthoepists.

c) The same (a) sound becomes (æ) in the words: (pæpi) for *papa*, (pæs-l) for *parcel*, (pætridʒ) for *partridge*, (stæəs) for *stars*, (æə) for *are*. All of these belong to the dialects of the negroes and the illiterate whites. By them the (æ) sound is given also to the vowels in *launch*, *haunch*, *saunter*, *haunt*, *aunt*, and nearly all similar words. This last list of words is not correctly pronounced by any class of Mississippians, as the vast majority of the educated people make the vowel sound as (ə).

Among the educated classes *pålm*, *cålm*, *psålm*, *quålm*, and similar words are correctly pronounced, but the illiterate of both colors pronounce the *a* as (æ). This change occurs in almost every instance before either a liquid or a nasal, but I do not think that these consonants could be said to produce the change.

d) In the words *scrofulo*, *cupålo*, and *fistulo* for *scrofula*, *cupola*, and *fistula*, the uneducated make (ô) of this (a).

A (æ).

§ 2. a) This sound of *a* becomes (a) in (bal) for *barrel*, (ma) for *mare*, (ra) for *rare*, (praə) for *prayer*, (ba) for *bare*, (da) for

dare. All of these words are used both by negroes and illiterate whites. It seems that this change occurs only before *r*, as I can find no instance of it under other circumstances. *R* in these words is not a guttural, but a vocal continuant (Evans). This vocal continuant has been entirely dropped from the pronunciation, and this disappearance has doubtless caused the change from (æ) to (a).

b) (æ) becomes (ɔ) in (tʃɔmp) for *champ*, (stɔmp) for *stamp*, (trɔmp) for *tramp*; but this pronunciation is not universal before *mp*, as is evinced by the fact that the regular (æ) sound is given in *camp*, *hamper*, *lamp*, *damp*, *sample*. The pronunciation of (æ) as (ɔ) belongs more especially to the negro dialect, but it is sometimes used by the whites of both classes.

c) The (æ) sound is changed to (e) in (keridʒ) for *carriage*, (hed) for *had*, (redɪʃ) for *radish*, (ken) for *can*, — all of which belong to the negro dialect. I think that no general rule can be formulated for this change, as, in words very similar, (æ) has its proper sound. In the words (keridʒ) for *carriage*, (keri) for *carry*, (skeəs) for *scarce*, (skeə) for *scare*, (tʃeə) for *chair*, (keə) for *care*, the (æ) is changed to (e), probably through the influence of the preceding palatal or the following *r*. All of these last-named words belong to the negro or the illiterate white dialect.

d) (æ) is changed to (ê) in (skêʃ) for *scarce*, to (o) in *wheelborrow* for *wheelbarrow*, and *stob* for *stab*, to (v) in *ruther* for *rather*. It appears somewhat strange that negroes should say (stob) for *stab*, and should pronounce *slab*, *scrap*, *trap*, *grab* correctly.

A (à).

§ 3. The sound of *a* denoted by (à) as in *past*, *fast*, is commonly pronounced by all classes as (æ): (æsk) for *ask*, (pæs) for *pass*, (fæst) for *fast*, (læst) for *last*, (græs) for *grass*, (cæf) for *calf*, (hæf) for *half*, (pæp) for *path*. A large number of examples of this pronunciation could be given, as it is almost universal in such words. A few educated people — but a very few — give this vowel the correct pronunciation. The words ending in *lf*, as *half*, *calf*, are probably correctly pronounced more often than the others.

A (ê).

§ 4. a) This sounds as (e) in (pleg) for *plague*, (nekid) for *naked*, (mek) for *make*. The last word belongs to the negro dialect; the first two are used by all classes.

b) The (æ) sound appears in (næp) for *nape*, (slækd) for *slaked*, (mæə) for *mayor*, (wæri) for *wary*, — the first two words being used by all classes, the last two by the illiterate.

c) The (i) sound is heard in (riʒinʒ) for *raisins*, (stip-l) for *staple*.

Au (ə).

§ 5. a) This sound appears as (æ) in the two negro words (sæs) for *sauce*, and (sæsi) for *saucy*. The negroes say (kêz) for *because*, (audêʃəs) for *audacious*. (Dob) for *daub* and (mud-dobə) for *mud-dauber* are very common pronunciations among all classes.

E (î).

§ 6. a) This sound is pronounced as (ê) in (blêt) for *bleat*. The short (i) sound is given to this long *e* in (slik) for *sleek*, (tit) for *teat*, (nigro and nigə) for *negro*.

b) Illiterate whites say (ræə) for *rear*, and (quæə) for *queer*. The short *e* sound is given this long *e* in a large group of words, in which *r* follows the vowel, even by well-educated people. *Peer*, *fear*, *here*, *seer*, *steer*, *gear*, are all pronounced as if the vowel were short (e).

E (e).

§ 7. a) The confusion of this sound with (i) is very common indeed among the illiterate classes, and is heard quite often among the educated: (simineri) for *seminary*, (simiteri) for *cemetery*, (sit) for *set*, (pin) for *pen*, (əgin) for *again*, (tʃist) for *chest*, (git) for *get*, etc. This list of words could be prolonged almost indefinitely, for whenever short *e* occurs in the middle of a word, short *i* is likely to be substituted for it.

b) In the negro dialect (e) is represented by (ê) in (hêd) for *head*, (êdʒ) for *edge*.

c) (e) sometimes becomes (i) in the dialect of the illiterate classes: as, (în) for *end*, (wîpən) for *weapon*.

d) (æ) appears for (e) in (ræs-l) for *wrestle*, (æri) for *e'er'a*, (præʃ) for *thresh*, (tærifai) for *terrify*, (yæs) for *yes*, (tæripin) for *terrapiin*, (togæðə) for *together*, (tæri-ə) for *terrier*. These

words, of course, belong to the dialects of the uneducated. For the change from (e) to (æ) in those words in which *r* precedes the vowel, see Sweet, p. 218, § 790. The *r* coming after the vowel seems to exercise somewhat the same influence. I cannot account for the change in the other words.

e) Both negroes and illiterate whites sometimes use (ɐ) in the place of (e): as, (tærib-l) for *terrible*, (trɛs-l) for *trestle*.

f) In (sont) for *sent*, (sot) for *set*, negroes use (o) in the place of (e). I think, however, that this is owing rather to analogy with some other preterites than to vowel change.

E (ə).

§ 8. a) As by this character (ë) not only a sound of *e*, but a sound of *i*, *o*, and *u*, is represented, I shall put under this head such words as have the same vowel sound that appears in *curl*, *word*, *sir*, etc.

In the negro dialect, the short *u* sound (ɐ) is very frequently used as an equivalent for this; as, (wɛk) for *work*, (dɛt) for *dirt*, (fɛst) for *first*, (mɛsi) for *mercy*, (pɛsli) for *purslane*, (skɛʃən) for *excursion*, (wɛs) for *worse*, (sɛtnli) for *certainly*. As may be seen from the phonetic spelling, the *r* of all of these words is dropped, which causes the change from (ë) to (ɐ).

b) Negroes and illiterate whites break the (ë) into (ye) before *r* in the words (pyɛt) for *pert*, (hyɛd) for *heard*, and the *r* is dropped.

c) By the illiterate of both colors (a) is substituted for (ë) in (kənsaand) for *concerned*, (sa) for *sir*, (saatʃ) for *search*, (saamint) for *sermon*, (saatn) for *certain*, (saavnt) for *servant*, (saav) for *serve*, (vaamint) for *vermin*, (yaab) for *herb*, (laan) for *learn*. It is readily seen that this change occurs only when the vowel precedes *r*. This change from (ë) to (a) before *r* is a very well-known phonetic change: cf. Sweet, p. 218, § 789; p. 264, § 904.

d) That development of parasite-vowels called by Sweet "parasiting" is exemplified by the pronunciation that educated people give to such words as *earth*, *birth*, *dearth*, *worth*. The *r* is hardly sounded at all, and the vowel sound is (ë), followed by a vanishing (i) sound: cf. Sweet, p. 40, § 159.

§ 9. The sound of *e* in *there* sometimes becomes in the dialects of the lower classes (a); as, (da) for *there*, (hwa) for *where*, (ða) for *there*.

I (ai).

§ 10. a) Long *i* (ai) is nearly always correctly pronounced, and seems to follow no rule in those changes that it does undergo. There is no group of related or similar words in which it suffers any regular change. In a few isolated examples there is incorrect pronunciation of this *i*, but nearly all of these are old words and owe their present forms to etymological spelling or assimilative change. Long *i* (ai) is changed to (i) in (blidʒd) for *obliged*, to (ê) in (tʃêni) for *china*, to (au) in (mauti) and (maut) for *mighty* and *might*. All of these pronunciations indicated by the phonetic spelling have been, at some time in the past, current in England.

I (i).

§ 11. a) Short *i* (i) is very frequently pronounced by all classes of people as short (e): as, (pen) for *pin*, (set) for *sit*, (ben) for *been*, (led) for *lid*, (melt) for *milt*, (merik-l) for *miracle*, (rikəl-ikʃ-n) for *recollection*, (sperit) for *spirit*, (yist-idi) for *yesterday*.

I suppose that this confusion of (i) with (e) is largely due to laziness or negligence, as surely the great majority of people must possess ears delicate enough to readily distinguish between the two sounds whenever their attention is called to the difference.

b) Negroes and uneducated whites sometimes give (i) the sound of (î) in (dîʃ) for *dish*, (fîʃ) for *fish*, (spîrit) for *spirit*, (îtfi) for *itch*.

c) All classes frequently give (i) the sound of (ê) in such words as *sing*, *ring*, *thing*, *fling*, *sting*. This sound is heard only before *ng*, and only in words that have the accent on the *ing*, and is due to nasalization.

d) Short (i) appears as (æ) in (mærik-l) for *miracle*, as (u) in (hwup) for *whip*, (wuf) for *wish*, as (ɐ) in (sɛrəp) for *sirup*, as (ai) in (haim) for *hymn*, and in (indʒain) for *engine*.

O (ô).

§ 12. a) Long *o* (ô) nearly always is correctly pronounced in Mississippi; (drev) for *drove* is the only instance that I know of, when (ɐ) is substituted for (ô), and I think that this is not due so much to vowel change as to a confusion with the preterites

of some other verbs. The noun *drove* is never given this pronunciation. The vulgar pronunciation of *home* and *stone*, so common in New England, is never heard in Mississippi. In Mississippi long *o* is never given the sound of (o).

O (o).

§ 13. *a*) One of the most characteristic marks of the Southern pronunciation is the substitution of (o) for short *o* (o); as, (dɔg) for *dog*, (hɔg) for *hog*, (lɔg) for *log*, (fɔg) for *fog*, (sɔŋ) for *song*, (lɔŋ) for *long*, (tɔŋ) for *tong*, (tɔm) for *tom*, (rɔmp) for *romp*, (ɔfis) for *office*, (cɔfi) for *coffee*, (ɔf) for *off*, (cɔst) for *cost*, (lɔst) for *lost*, (tɔst) for *tost*, (tɔs) for *toss*, (lɔs) for *loss*, (mɔs) for *moss*, (Gɔd) for *God*. The *o* intermediate between (o) and (ə), by Webster marked ô, is generally pronounced (o); as, (rimɔs) for *remorse*, (cɔs) for *corse*, (sɔdid) for *sordid*. On the other hand, *sop*, *lop*, *sot*, *not*, *lot*, *rod*, *hod*, *nod*, *throb*, *rob*, *sob*, *stock*, *rock*, *shock*, *sorrow*, *morrow*, *borrow*, *fox*, *box*, are correctly pronounced.

As *God* is the only word ending in a dental, and having (o) instead of (ə), and as this pronunciation of *God* is rare, we may conclude that short *o* preserves its proper sound before the dentals. Before the voiceless mutes *p*, *t*, and *c*, the *o* is properly sounded. These are the only general rules that can be formulated.

b) In the negro dialect short (o) is sometimes changed into (æ), as (dræp) for *drop*, (kræp) for *crop*, (sæft) for *soft*. However, most other words similar to these are correctly pronounced.

c) In (gɛt) for *got* and (hwɛt) for *what*, we have (ɛ) for (o). These two words are pronounced in this way by the illiterate and by a large number of the educated.

Oi (oi).

§ 14. *a*) The negroes and illiterate whites give (oi) the sound of (ai) in a large number of words. This pronunciation is probably more common among the negroes than among the illiterate whites: (bail) for *boil*, (spail) for *spoil*, (dʒaist) for *joist*, (sail) for *soil*, (haist) for *hoist*, (dʒain) for *join*, (paint) for *point*, (paizn) for *poison*; but *coin*, *voice*, *moist*, *noise*, are correctly pronounced.

U (*ú*).

§ 15. *a*) This *u* is pronounced by negroes as (ɐ) in (hɛf) for *hoof*, (tɐ) for *to*.

b) (ô) takes the place of (û) in (ʃôli) for *surely*, (ʃô) for *sure*, (inf·ôəns) for *insurance*, in the negro dialect.

U (*u*).

§ 16. *a*) This sound of *u* is frequently changed to (ɐ); as, (set) for *soot*, (tɛk) for *took*, (pɛt) for *put*, (ʃɛk) for *shook*, in the dialects of the uneducated.

U (*v*).

§ 17. *a*) U (ɐ) has the sound of (o) in (honri) for *hungry*, and in (totʃ) for *touch*, in the negro dialect.

b) Short *i* is seen in (dʒist) for *just*, (kivə) for *cover*, (sitʃ) for *such* — all negro dialect.

c) Short *e* appears in (dʒes) for *just*, (herik-n) for *hurricane*, (setʃ) for *such*, (tetʃ) for *touch*, (ʃet) for *shut*. All of these words belong either to the negro or the illiterate white dialect.

d) In the negro words (haerik-n) for *hurricane*, (sûp-l) for *supple*, (æ) and (û) appear for (ɐ).

U (*yu*).

§ 18. This *u* has the (ô) sound in the two negro words (kyô) for *cure*, and (pyô) for *pure*.

CONSONANTS.

§ 19. I shall first consider the half-vowels *w* and *y*. A discussion of these two letters must, however, be necessarily short, as they occur out of their proper places in very few dialect words. *Y* takes the place of aspirate *h* in (yɐ) for *here* and (yaab) for *herb*. *Y* is prefixed in (yɛp) for *earth*. *W* is inserted after *g* in (gwain) for *going*, after *t* in (twel) for *till*, and is dropped in (umən) for *woman*. These pronunciations of all of these words belong to the negro dialect.

SPIRANTS.

§ 20. *a*) *H* is prefixed to a few words; as, (hit) for *it*, (hai spai) for *I spy*, (hênt) for *ain't* — contraction of *are not*. *Haint* is possibly a contraction of *have not*. The uneducated so confuse

the auxiliaries *be* and *have* that it is impossible to tell, from the use of the word *haint*, whether it is a contraction of *have not* or of *are not*. *H* is omitted in (ɛmb-l) for *humble*, (wai) for *why*. *H* is sometimes replaced by *y*, as noted in the paragraph above.

b) *S* becomes *sh* in (likəɾɪʃ) for *licorice*, (slaiʃ) for *slice*, and *j* in (medʒe) for *measure*. *S* is prefixed in (smidʒit) for *midget*, (skwentʃ) for *quench*. The *s* in *squench*, the Century Dictionary says, is an intensive prefix, and I suppose the *s* in *smidget* has the same force. All of these words belong to the negro and illiterate white dialects.

c) Spirant *z*, *c*, and *ch* have no changes not recorded elsewhere.

LIQUIDS.

§ 21. a) *L* becomes *r* in (bres) for *bless*, (bræk) for *black*, both of which forms occur only in the negro dialect. In no other words that I know, however, does this change take place.

L is dropped in (hep) for *help*, (hôp) for *holp*, and (wənat) for *walnut*, in the dialects of the uneducated classes. In all other words that I know of, the *l* is fully sounded.

b) *R* is so seldom pronounced in the middle or at the end of words, by any class of people, that its pronunciation in either of those positions forms an exception. It is quite a peculiar circumstance that a class of very illiterate whites pronounce *r* much more distinctly than any other people in Mississippi. This pronunciation of *r* forms, perhaps, the most distinguishing feature of the real "po white trash" dialect as contrasted with the negro dialect. But it is in order to say that no class pronounces *r* at all uniformly. Words in which *r* is omitted are so numerous that it is impossible to give a complete list of them, so I shall mention only a few: (bəst) for *burst*, (ɛəs) for *curse*, (fəm) for *from*, (pôt) for *throat*, (pô) for *throw*, (mô) for *more*, (cæə) for *care*, (ðæə) for *there*, etc. *R*, since rarely sounded, is the occasion of more of the vowel-changes of the Mississippi dialect than any other letter. Cf. §§ 2, *a*; 2, *c*; 6, *b*; 8, *a*; 8, *b*; 8, *c*; 8, *d*; 18. According to Earle, *r* is frequently dropped from words in the south of England, and especially by the cockneys.

NASALS.

§ 22. a) *M* is vocalized in (el-m) for *elm* and (hel-m) for *helm*, by negroes. All classes vocalize the *m* in *spasm*, *chasm*,

schism, and in those words ending in *-ism*. *M* assimilates *v* to itself in (gimi) for *give me*, and *t* in (lemi) for *let me*, in the dialects of the uneducated.

b) *N* is added to (autn) for *out*, (ɔfn) for *off*, (lesn) for *unless* — all of which belong to the dialects of the lower classes. *N* seems to exercise a curious attraction and at the same time repulsion for dentals. If a word end in *n* + *d*, the *d* is nearly always dropped in the dialects of the negroes and the illiterate whites; but if the word end in *n* without a following *t*, *t* is nearly always added: (graun) for *ground*, (haen) for *hand*, (sēmānt) for *sermon*, (vaamint) for *vermin*.

LABIALS.

§ 23. a) *P* has no very noteworthy changes from its regular use. It is left out in (wəs nes) for *wasp-nest*. In (sempn) for *something*, *p* is an excrescent consonant, as in *empty* from A.-S. *emetig*, *emtig*, in Lat. *sumpsi* from *sumo*.

b) *B*, in the negro dialect, frequently replaces *v*; as, (beri) for *very*, (hebn) for *heaven*, (hæb) for *have*, (nêbl) for *navel*, (ebri) for *every*, (deb-l) for *devil*.

c) *F* is dropped or assimilated to *t* in (atə and ætə) for *after*, and replaces *v* in (hæf tə) for *have to*. In the negro dialect a still further change occurs with reference to (hæf tə), the *f* being dropped or assimilated as in (ætə), the expression becomes (hæt-ə).

d) *V*, as noted above, is frequently replaced by *b*. *V* is often substituted for final *ð* in the negro dialect; as, (smûv) for *smooth*, (sûv) for *soothe*, (brêv) for *breathe*. *V* is assimilated to *m* in (gimi) for *give me*.

DENTALS.

T.

§ 24. a) Final *t* is usually unpronounced by the negroes and illiterate whites, and sometimes by the educated; as, (bes) for *best*, (wəs) for *worst*, (dʒəs) for *just*, (kep) for *kept*, (sep) for *except*, (spek) for *expect*, (swep) for *swept*. This list of words could be prolonged almost indefinitely, but I give only a few as examples.

b) The plural of nouns ending in *st* is always pronounced by negroes as if formed by adding *es*; as, (pôstез) for *posts*, (gôstез) for *ghosts*, (hôtстез) for *hosts*, (trêstез) for *trusts*, etc.

c) A final *t* is added in (klôst) for *close*, (sēmānt) for *sermon*,

(vaamint) for *vermin*, (træft) for *trough*, (twaist) for *twice*, (wænst) for *once* — all, illiterate dialects.

d) *T* replaces *d* in (biyant) for *beyond*, (helt and hilt) for *held*, (hôlt) for *hold*, (tærekli) for *directly*. These words are, of course, used mainly by the uneducated.

e) In the negro dialect *t* replaces *th* in (mënt) for *month*, and becomes *ch* in (tjûn) for *tune* and (stintf) for *stint*.

D.

§ 25. a) In the negro and illiterate white dialects *d* is regularly dropped after *l* and *n*; as, (tjilən) for *children*, (æn) for *and*, (graun) for *ground*, (baun) for *bound*, (raun) for *round*, (hæn) for *hand*, (ôl) for *old*, (fôl) for *fold*.

For change from *d* to *t*, see paragraph above.

b) Before the *yû* sound, negroes regularly pronounce *d* as *j*; as, (dʒûti) for *duty*, (dʒû) for *dew*, (dʒûbəs) for *dubious*, (dʒûrin) for *during*. *D* has the *j* sound also in (idʒit) for *idiot*.

§ 26. a) *Th* (p) initial frequently, but not always, has the sound of *t* in the negro dialect; as, (tɪŋk) for *think*, (tɒt) for *thought*, (tri) for *three*, etc. However, *thresh*, *thumb*, *thunder*, are correctly pronounced. *Th* (p) final, and in some cases *th* (p) initial, has the sound of *f*; as, (frû) for *through*, (mauf) for *mouth*, (nɛfin) for *nothing*, (tûf) for *tooth*, (bref) for *breath*, etc. The last list of words, as well as the first, belongs to the negro dialect.

b) *Th* (ð) is nearly always pronounced as *d* at the beginning of words, by negroes; as, (dis) for *this*, (dæt) for *that*, (dem) for *them*, (den) for *then*, etc. At the end of words, negroes generally give (ð) the *v* sound; as (smûv) for *smooth*, (briv) for *breathe*, (sûv) for *soothe*, etc. Sometimes negroes pronounce (ð) in the middle of words as *d*; as (brɛdə) for *brother*, (ænɛdə) for *another*, (nîdə) for *neither*.

GUTTURALS.

§ 27. a) Mistakes are made in the pronunciation of the gutturals in only a few classes of words. *G* is almost always dropped at the end of words ending in *-ing*. I think that the illiterate never pronounce the *g*, and the educated very rarely do. Negroes do not pronounce the *g* before *th* in such words as *strength*, *length*.

b) *x* is pronounced as *z* in (zækli) for *exactly*, by negroes.

LIST OF WORDS.

A.

A. By illiterate whites the letter *a* is almost always used before the present participle, forming a part of the progressive, or continuous, state of the verb. They say: "He was a going," "He is a living," "He has been a keeping store." This, no doubt, is akin to the *a* in such expressions as, He goes a fishing, a hunting, etc. This latter construction is, of course, derived from the A.-S. *on* followed by its appropriate object; and from confusion with this the former construction has arisen.

A. Final *a* in proper names is always pronounced as *y* by negroes and illiterate whites. They say: "Miry," for Mira; "Lucindy," for Lucinda; "Senatoby," for Senatobia; "Minnesoty," for Minnesota, etc.

Adge (êdʒ). Negro for *edge*.

Afeard (əfiərd). This word, marked obsolete or provincial by Webster, is still in very common use by the negroes and uneducated whites in Mississippi. In it we see the preservation of an old form in the language of low life; as it is well known that the word *afeard* was once very commonly used by the best writers, and that it is, in fact, derived from A.-S. *æfæred*, p.p. of *æfæran*, to frighten. The form *afeard* is heard also in Louisiana and Massachusetts.

A flutin' and a flyin' (ɛ flütin æn ɛ flain). A phrase used generally by the uneducated. When a man is moving rapidly in grand style, or succeeding remarkably well in any undertaking, he is said to be *a flutin' and a flyin'*.

Afore (əfðə) [A.-S. *ätforan*]. Although marked as obsolete in the dictionaries, it is still in common use among the illiterate whites of Mississippi.

Agin (əgin). Negro and illiterate white for *against*.

Ag on (æg ɔn) [A.-S. *eegan*]. Negro and illiterate white for *egg on*, meaning to urge on, to incite. Used also in Louisiana.

Ain't (eint). This is used by all classes for *am not*, *are not*, *is not*; and by negroes for *has not* and *have not*. Negroes nearly always say, "I ain't got" for I haven't got, and "He ain't seen" for He hasn't seen, etc. Cf. *hain't*.

Air (æə). Negroes and illiterate whites nearly always use this pronunciation for *are*.

Alabam (æləbæm). Negro and illiterate white for *Alabama*.

All (əl). The general use of *all* in such expressions as, "All the far he can run," "All the fast it can fly," etc., is peculiar. This use of *all* has, however, been noticed by Dr. Brown in his notes on dialects in Tennessee. *All* in this construction corresponds almost exactly to the adverbial use of A.-S. *eall*, entirely; as, *All the far* means entirely as far.

Allers (ələz). Negro and illiterate white for *always*.

All-to-smash (əl tɛ smæʃ). Bartlett gives this phrase as meaning "smashed to pieces." In Mississippi, however, it is used with the meaning that Bartlett gives to "All-to-pieces"; i.e. excessively; as, "I beat him running *all-to-smash*."

Am (æm). All persons of the verb *to be*, in the present tense, indicative, are involved in inextricable confusion by negroes. They say "I is," "You am," "I are," "You is," "We am," etc.

Ambeer (æmbiə). A common name for tobacco spittle, used by all classes. Bartlett says that this name is probably derived from *amber*, denoting its color.

Anudder (æn-ədə). A negro form for *another*.

Anvil (ænv-l). A word once used by a colored friend of mine in the place of *annual*. He was speaking of an annual Methodist conference, and called it an *anvil* conference. The connection between this and the habit that Methodist ministers have of pounding on the pulpit is very *striking*.

Arrove (ær-ôv). Used even by educated people for *arrived*, this past being formed upon the analogy of such words as *drive*, *thrive*, etc., a romance verb being thus confused with strong native verbs on account of the similarity of their root syllables.

Arter (atə). Negro for *after*.

Article (atik-l). This word is pronounced by illiterate whites with a strong accent on the second syllable. This pronunciation is heard also in Tennessee.

Ary (æri). Used by negroes and illiterate whites for *e'er a*; as, "I haint seed ary man to-day." This is a very common usage among these classes, being almost invariably employed for *any* or *a single*.

As (æz). Used after comparatives, in the place of *than*, by illit-

erate whites. They say: "This is better as that," "I'd rather have this as that," etc.

Ashy (æfi). Used by nearly all people here, as in Tennessee, as a synonym for *angry*. Dr. Brown gives the following excellent explanation of this use: "Shakespeare uses the word in the sense of *pale*, in connection with the word *anger*, in 'Venus and Adonis': —

" 'Still is he sullen, still he low'rs and frets,
'Twixt crimson shame and anger, ashy pale.' "

From being one of the signs of anger this word comes at present to be used for anger itself."

Ask a blessing. The methods used by illiterate whites in requesting one to ask the blessing, or say grace, are numerous and interesting. I give some specimens: "Ask the blessin'"; "Say grace"; "Grace the table"; "Make a beginnin'"; "Begin the meal"; "Open the way"; "Start off"; "Look up."

At (æt). Used by negroes as equivalent to *right* (adv.); as, "Come at on"; i.e. Come right on, come at once.

Atter (ætə). A pronunciation of *after*, used by negroes and illiterate whites.

Aunt or Aunty (ænt or ænti). An appellation applied by all classes to old colored women, as *uncle* is applied to old colored men. In addressing an old negress, it is customary to say *aunty* if her name is not known, and *aunt* with her name expressed if it is known; as, "Aunt Dinah," "Aunt Sallie," etc.

Ax (æks). Negro for *ask*. This form is now marked as obsolete or vulgar in the dictionaries, but it is as old as the English language itself, being derived from the A.-S. *acsian*, *axian*. According to Webster, Bartlett, and Pegge, it is still quite common in some portions of England among the illiterate classes. The form *ast*, a corruption, or rather mispronunciation, of *asked*, is very common in Mississippi as well as in Tennessee.

B.

Bad off (bæd ɒf). Used by all classes to mean *unwell*, *sick*. It also means *anxious for* or *desirous of*; as, "He is *bad off* for a gun"; i.e. he is extremely anxious for a gun. It some-

times means poorly provided with; as, This country is *bad off* for horses; i.e., has very few horses or very inferior ones.

Barbeshela (barbæfelə). A word borrowed from the Choctaw Indian language, and used in the southern central portion of the State, by negroes and illiterate whites, to signify a *friend*.

Barl (barl). Illiterate white for *barrel*. Negroes generally call *barrel*, *bæl* (bæl). Immigrants from North Carolina nearly always say *barl*.

Bar off (ba əf). A term used by farmers in the cultivation of cotton. When nearly all of the dirt is ploughed away from the cotton, so that the cotton-plant stands on a narrow ridge of ground, the *cotton* is said to be *barred off*. This use of *bar* is, I suppose, derived from the noun *bar*, as the slender ridges of dirt on which the cotton-plant stands may well be called a *bar*. However, it may come from the verb *bare*, as the roots of the plant are bared by the removal of the dirt.

Barrygraph (bærigræf). A word that a member of the colored race once used, in my hearing, for *photograph*. He was going to have his *barrygraph* taken by a travelling photographer then in town.

Begun (big-ən). Used by educated people for *began*. This confusion of course may spring from the use of the past participle for the preterite, or it may be a relic of the old plural form of the past tense, *begunnon*.

Berry (beri). Negro pronunciation of *very*.

Bestest (bestes). Double superlative, formed from *best*. Used by negroes.

Beyant (biyant). A common form, used by illiterate whites for *beyond*.

Biern (biærn). Illiterate white for *burn*. An uneducated white man of North Mississippi once told me that he didn't mind eating pepper; it couldn't *biern* him. This pronunciation of *burn* is tolerably common.

Biggity (bigiti). A word used to some extent by all classes, but principally by negroes or illiterate whites, to mean *self-conceited*. It is probably *bigot* with the adjectival ending *y* added. A *bigoted* man is nearly always *biggity*.

Bile (bail). This word is used by both negroes and illiterate whites for the verb *to boil* and for the noun *boil*, a running

sore. It is heard also in Louisiana, and may be said to be common throughout the South.

Bimeby (baimbai). Negro for *by and by*.

Bip into (bip intû). Used by illiterate whites to mean to attack with either words or blows. Two speakers are said to *bip into* each other, when they attack each other in a lively or severe manner; so also of pugilists.

Blackguard (blægəd). Used by illiterate whites as a verb meaning to laugh and talk in a gay, frivolous manner, even though the conversation be perfectly chaste. This class of people speaks of the ordinary small talk of a sociable or reception as *blackguarding*.

Blame from (blêm frəm). Largely used instead of *blame for* by all classes; as, "I didn't blame him from crying when that man hit him."

Blate (blêt). Used by all classes for *bleat*; heard also in Louisiana; and, according to Webster, is provincial in England.

Bleedged or **Bleedzed** (blîdʒd or blîdzd). Negro for *obliged*. These forms are common in the majority of the Southern States. The pronunciation (ðblîdʒd) was once regarded as a mark of gentility in Virginia, as I am informed.

Block and **tickle** (blok ænd tik-l). Almost universally used by workmen for *block and tackle*. Webster says that *tackle* is frequently pronounced (têk-l); this, however, is, I think, not heard in Mississippi.

Blowed up (blôd ɛp). Illiterate white for *bloated*. A man becomes *blowed up* by the constant use of whiskey.

Boil (boil). Illiterate white for *bile*, used also in Kentucky. "He vomited boil." This is the only instance that I can recall in which *oi* takes the place of *i*, and I suppose that the confusion in this word is due to the fact that the word *boil* is generally pronounced *bile* (bail) by the illiterate, and that, probably recognizing the error of this, they endeavor to atone for it, thus giving us *boil*, where in reality we should have *bile*.

Bone (bôn). Bartlett gives this word as meaning *to apply one's self closely*. But in Mississippi it is largely used by all classes to mean *to dun*.

Bonibus (bonibus). Illiterate white for *anonymous*. This word is current in Holmes County at least.

Borry (bori). Negro for *borrow*. Also used in Canada.

Bound (baund). This word is used by negroes (sometimes by white people) to mean *to assert positively*, or sometimes almost with the sense of *to bet* or *wager* or *confidently expect*; as "I *bound* dat nigger sho yelled when dat toof was pulled."

Branch (bræntʃ). Used by all classes for any very small stream, without having the least reference to its being a tributary of any larger stream.

Brer (brɛ). Negro for *brother*.

Bresh (brɛʃ). Negro for *brush*.

Bress (brɛs). Negro for *bless*.

Brickle and Brickly (brik-l and brikli). Used mostly by negroes and illiterate whites, meaning *brittle*, *easily broken*. The word seems to be a hybrid between *break* and *brittle*. According to Bartlett, *brickly* is used in Georgia. Both are used in Louisiana by settlers of English lineage.

Brief (brɪf). Used by negroes to mean *nice*, *elegant*. I once heard a negro tell a young man who had dressed up to go to see his sweet-heart: "Boss, you sho looks brief." De Vere says that *brief* is used by the lower classes in Virginia to mean *peart*, *lively*; as, "The wind is 'brief' to-day"; i.e. the wind is brisk or lively. In New England *brief* means *prevalent*; as, "The measles are brief in Boston."

Brotheren or Brudderen (brɛðər-n or brɛdər-n). Negro and illiterate white for *brethren*.

Brung (brʌŋ). Negro for *brought*. This form doubtless owes its origin to analogy with such words as *sing*, *sling*, *ring*.

Bruze around (brʌz-ə-ɾaun). A negro phrase meaning *to wander around*, *to go about without any set purpose*.

Bullis (bulis). A word much used by the negroes of the southern central portion of Mississippi for *muscadine*. Its plural is *bullises*.

Bull tongue plow (bul tɔŋ plau). A kind of plough with a very narrow share shaped somewhat like a bull's tongue, hence the name.

Bump (bɛmp). This word is used principally by school-boys. The process of bumping is as follows: four boys take hold of another, each one seizing a leg or an arm, and swing him so that the rear of his anatomy strikes against a tree with considerable force. *Buck* is the term used for this in Kentucky.

Bumptious (bɛmpʃəs). Both Webster and Bartlett quote from Halliwell in regard to this word, and he says that it means

“*self-conceited, forward, pushing.*” The negroes of Mississippi, however, use this word to mean *irascible, easily angered*.

Bust (bʌst). This pronunciation of *burst* is by no means confined to Mississippi, yet as it is so much used here, I think that it should be mentioned. *Bust* is used to mean a failure of any kind; but is most frequently used to signify a commercial failure, or in the University, a failure in recitation. At Vanderbilt University, Cornell, and many other colleges also, it has the latter meaning. *Bust* is sometimes used to denote a *spree*. In all of these meanings, except the last, *bust* is used both as a noun and as a verb — a man *busts* or makes a *bust*.

By sun (bai sʌn). Negro and illiterate white for *before sunset*. Among the lower classes of society, it is usual to reckon time by the sun; so “an hour, or two hours, by sun” means an hour or two hours before sunset.

C.

Cahoot (kêh-ût). According to Bartlett, used in the South and West, to denote a *partnership* or *company*. It is certainly much used by all classes in Mississippi in this sense. Two men are said to be in *cahoot* when they act jointly in any manner. This word differs from *snooks*, in that it means the partnership itself, whereas *snooks* refers rather to the results of a partnership. Men go *snooks* with the proceeds that arise as a result of their being in *cahoot*.

Capen (kæpn). Negro for *captain*.

Carry (kæri). *Carry*, in the sense of *escort, accompany, or lead*, is very commonly used by all classes — a young man *carries* his sweet-heart to church; a man *carries* a horse to water, etc. This use is common in Virginia and Maryland.

Cat (kæt). A certain game of ball. In this sense there are two kinds of *cat*, — *one-eyed cat* and *two-eyed cat*. In the former there is only one batter, in the latter, two. This game is played also in Kentucky and District of Columbia.

Cat has got his tongue (kætz get iz tɛŋ). If a question be addressed to any one, and no answer be given, people say that the *cat has got* that individual's *tongue*; in which event it would, of course, be impossible for him to speak.

Cavort (kə-vɔrt). This word is given by the Century Dictionary as slang and as probably connected with *curvet*. It is, how-

ever, so commonly used in Mississippi by all classes to mean *to prance, to rage, to create a disturbance*, that I venture to place it in this list of dialect words.

Chany (tʃɛni). Negro for *china*, used in speaking of *chinaware*. This word was formerly in good use in England.

Chaw tobacco more than once (tʃə təbækə mōə ðn wɛnst). A very common phrase among negroes and illiterate whites. It means *to repeat*. A negro says: "I never chaws my ter-backer mo dan wunst," meaning, "I never repeat anything." Here we also see the old form *chaw* preserved.

Cheep (tʃɪp). Illiterate white for *word of protest* or *complaint*. In the language of the uneducated white people, you never hear a *cheep* from any one perfectly satisfied.

Cheer (tʃiə). Is commonly used by illiterate whites as an intransitive verb meaning *to become cheerful*. The adverb *up*, which is generally put after *cheer* when it has this intransitive meaning, is omitted by these people. They say, for instance: "As soon as he saw his mother, he began to *cheer*"; i.e. to cheer up.

Cheer (tʃiə). Common negro and illiterate white pronunciation of *chair*. Heard also in Louisiana.

Chillun (tʃilən). Negro for *children*.

Chimbly (tʃimbli). Negro and illiterate white for *chimney*. Heard also in Kentucky, New and Old England, and Louisiana.

Chist (tʃɪst). Negro and illiterate white pronunciation of *chest*. Bartlett says that *chist* is also common in New England.

Chomp (tʃɒmp). This pronunciation of *champ* is the one always used by negroes in Mississippi; and, according to Bartlett, it is heard also in New England, the western part of the United States, and even in the north of England. Educated people of Mississippi, however, generally give this word the correct pronunciation.

Choog or Chug (tʃûg or tʃɛg). Both used in Tennessee in the same sense as in Mississippi, i.e. *to cast into the water* or, sometimes, *to punch*; as, "He chugged me in the ribs." Dr. Brown says that, in the sense of casting into the water, the word has special reference to the sound made by the object in striking the water.

Chune (tʃûn). Negro for *tune*.

Chunk (tʃɛnk). Illiterate white for something *moderately good* or *nice*; as, "They had a chunk of a wedding"; i.e. a moderately nice wedding.

Cillustrious (sil·æstriəs). Illiterate white for *illustrious*. I have noticed this usage only in the following line of a hymn: "When that cillustrious day shall rise."

Closte (klöst). Almost always used by negroes and illiterate whites for *close*. This occurs also in Tennessee and elsewhere in the United States.

Clum (kləm). Used by negroes and illiterate whites for *climbed*, and is doubtless akin to the old preterite *clomb*. It is used also in Louisiana and New England.

Collards (kolərdz). Used by all classes for *colewort*, a kind of cabbage that does not grow to a head. Bartlett says that it is common in the South.

Come (kəm). Quite generally used by all classes for *came*.

Come up to the scratch (kəm ʌp tū ðə skrætʃ). Used by all classes to mean *to do one's duty, to do what is expected of one*. It is akin to the expression *to come up to the chalk* used in other parts of the United States with the same meaning as *to come up to the scratch* is used in Mississippi.

Companion (kəm·pæniən). Used to mean wife by a large number of educated people—a very fitting specialization of the generic term, as a man's wife is, for him, *the companion* above all others.

Confab (kon·fæb). This word, which Webster gives as a contraction of *confabulation*, is used by negroes both as a verb and as a noun: as a verb, it means to talk with one familiarly; as a noun, it means familiar conversation.

Consarned (kons·arnd). Illiterate white for *concerned*. This is a favorite expletive among the lower classes of whites. They say: "I'll be consarned if it ain't so"; "Consarn the thing"; "That consarned old mule like to broke my neck."

Coon (kûn). This is the ordinary contraction for *raccoon*, and of late has come to be extensively used to mean also a *negro*. I think this last usage should rather be classed as slang; it is common to all of the Southern States, and even extends to our more northern brethren.

Coon (kûn). Used by all classes to mean *to crawl over*. If a man cannot walk a log over a creek, he gets down on his hands and knees and *coons* it; or if he get astride of the log and pull himself along with his hands, he is then also said to *coon* it.

Coon's age (kûnz êdʒ). A negro term for a *long time*. The im-

pression that raccoons are very long-lived seems to prevail among the colored race. In speaking to an acquaintance that they have not seen for some time, they say: "Whar's you bin, I ain't seed you in a coon's age." Bartlett mentions this as used in Texas and other Southern States.

Country jake (kɛntri dʒɛk). A man whose dress and manners proclaim him to be from the backwoods. Used also in Tennessee.

Cowcumber (kaukɛmbə). Negro and illiterate white for *cucumber*. Used also in Kentucky, and said to have been formerly the correct pronunciation in England.

Cracked (krækt). This word is used by all classes for *crack-brained*, *slightly demented*.

Crank-sided (kræŋks-aided). Used by all classes to mean *twisted* or *bent to one side*. A man may be *cranksided* physically, mentally, or morally. The word is, of course, also used of inanimate objects. Frequently heard in Tennessee.

Crap (kræp). Negro pronunciation of *crop*.

Crep (krep). Used largely by all classes for *crept*.

Crope (krôp). Negro for *crept*. The form *crope* is marked obsolete by Webster; it is, however, preserved in negro speech, and is much nearer the A.-S. forms *creap* and *crupon* (?) than the modern preterite *crept* is.

Curtail (kɜrt-êl). Understood by negroes to mean to *cut off the tail*. A colored brother, in a moment of religious enthusiasm, once exclaimed in response to the preacher's request for the Lord to curtail the power of the devil: "Yes! Lawd, cut his tail smack and smooove off."

Cuss (kɜs). Used by all classes for *curse*. This word is, of course, in nowise confined to Mississippi, but as this pronunciation is so common here, I have thought it best to mention it. *Cuss* as a noun, Bartlett says, is an abbreviation of *customer*, and means a *worthless fellow*, a *scamp*.

Cute (kyût). Bartlett gives the word as current in New England, among the uneducated, with the meaning of *acute*, *sharp*, *keen*; and says that it is an abbreviation of *acute*. In Mississippi this word is used by all classes to mean *charming*, *attractive*, and is generally applied to small things. We speak of a *cute* baby, a *cute* girl, a *cute* hat, etc. The word *little* generally follows *cute* or is understood after it. It seems that in order to be really cute a thing must in some

way be diminutive. The word has the latter meaning in New York.

Cyarn (kyan). Negro for *carrion*.

D.

Daddy (dædi). Webster gives the word as used by small children for *father*. In Mississippi this word is used principally by negroes, and is frequently applied to old negroes without any idea of paternity. *Daddy Jack* would ordinarily mean an older negro than *Uncle Jack*.

Dame (dēm). A euphemistic form of *damn*, used to some extent by illiterate whites.

Dar (da). Negro for *dare* and for *there*.

Dassent (dæstnt). Negro for *dare not*. Used also in New England.

Dead give way (ded giv wê). All classes use this term to mean a *complete exposure*; as, "What he said was a *dead give way*; i.e. completely exposed his character, purpose, intentions, or something of the kind.

Dead-line (dedlāin). A word used by boys in playing the game of marbles called ring-men. It is a line drawn two or three feet from the ring, between the ring and *taws*. If a player fail to *plump* over this line, he is thrown out of the game. The word is used in Kentucky with the same meaning.

Debble (debl). Negro for *devil*.

Deesh (dif). Illiterate white and negro pronunciation of *dish*.

Dientical (dai-entək-l). Very frequently used by negroes and illiterate whites for *identical*.

Differs not (difəs not). Sometimes used by illiterate whites for *matters not*; as, "It differs not whether it be true or not."

Dip (dip). Illiterate white for *sauce* to be used with pudding. Bartlett marks the word as Southwestern. *Dip* is also used for *dip of snuff*, the word *snuff* being generally omitted.

Dirt up (dërt ɐp). In the cultivation of cotton this phrase is used as the exact opposite of *bar off*. When the intervening space between the rows is so ploughed as to throw the dirt up to the cotton-plant, the cotton is said to be *dirted up*.

Disremember (disrəmembə). Webster marks this form as obsolete in England and local in America. It certainly is very largely used in Mississippi, and probably throughout the South, by the lower classes of both colors.

Do (dô). Negro for *though* and for *door*.

Does (dæz). Used by negroes for *do*; as, "I does; they does."

Done (dœn). This word is very often interposed between the auxiliary *have* and the past participle, to give additional completeness to the sense; as, "I have done lost," which seems to mean more than "I have lost." This distinction is not always observed; *done lost* is very frequently used when we should expect simple *lost*, and *vice versa*. Bartlett says that this use of *done* is a very common vulgarism throughout the South.

Do odds and eens (dû odz æn inz). Illiterate whites use this expression for doing small jobs about the house; for instance, old women sometimes say: "I've been a *doin'* odds and eens all mornin'." Educated people sometimes use the phrase with the same meaning, but give it the correct pronunciation.

Dove (dôv). Commonly used for *dived* by negroes and illiterate whites, and sometimes even by educated people. It is another instance of the survival of old forms in common speech, when they have become obsolete in elegant discourse. According to Bartlett this form is also used in Canada even by the cultivated classes. It is heard also in Louisiana.

Drank (drænk). This past tense is confused with the past participle even by educated people, so that they say: "I drunk" and "I have drank."

Drap (dræp). Negro for *drop*. Commonly used in Louisiana, and rarely heard in New England.

Dropped his bait-can (dræpt iz bêt-kæn). A negro expression meaning *made a mistake*. Its origin is evident; one of the most serious mistakes that an angler can make, is to drop his bait-can, especially if it fall into the water. Thus *dropped his bait-can* has acquired the general meaning of making any serious mistake. If a man says or does anything that afterwards turns out unfortunately for him, he is said to have *dropped his bait-can* when he said or did it.

Dreen (drîn). Negro for *drain*, meaning a ravine or ditch. It is used also in Kentucky, New England, and Louisiana.

Drug (dreg). A form for *dragged*, still used, even by educated people. This form is more nearly allied to the A.-S. strong verb *dragan*, *drôg*, *dragen*, than the more elegant weak form *dragged* is; and, I suppose, should be classed among old forms preserved in common speech. It is used also in Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Druther (drɛðə). Preference. This is probably a corruption of *had rather*. I heard it in the following sentence spoken by an old negro woman: "Everybody has their *druthers*, and I would rather you would do this than anybody." *Druther* for *would rather* is very common, but in its noun use given above, it is rare.

Druv (drɛv). Negro for *drove* (verb). *Driv* (driv) is sometimes heard for *drove*. Both *driv* and *druv* are common in Louisiana.

Due me a compliment (dyû mî ə komplimənt). A phrase used quite frequently by illiterate whites for *owe me an apology*; as, "Mr. Smith, you are *due me a compliment* for the way you acted yesterday."

Dunno (dʌnô). Negro and illiterate white for *don't know*.

E.

East (ɪst). The common pronunciation of *yeast*. *Yeast* is so pronounced in Tennessee also.

Easy (izi). Used by all classes for *gently*, *softly*, as, walk or talk *easy*. It has the same meaning in Louisiana, New England, Ohio, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

Ebry (ebri). Negro for *every*.

Een or Eend (in or ind). Illiterate white for *end*.

Eetchy (itʃi). Negro corruption of *itch*, used as a verb. In the secondary meaning of *long for* or *eagerly desire*, it is more frequently heard. A negro once told me that on a cold morning he felt more like working, but that he never did *eetchy* for work.

Elected (il'ekted). Illiterate whites use this word to mean *to be provided with, to have a sufficient supply of*. They say: "I am *elected* as to corn"; i.e. "I am provided with corn"; "I have a sufficient supply of corn."

Ellum (el-m). Negro and illiterate white for *elm*. Used also in Canada and Tennessee.

Enduring (end-yûrɪŋ). Negro term for *during*. This is frequently followed by *of*; as, *enduring of the day*.

-ent (ent). It is a characteristic of the illiterate white inhabitants of the pine district of Mississippi to give special emphasis to the pronunciation of this syllable when final; as, *presidént*, *commandmént*, *contentmént*.

-es (ez). The plural form, ending in *es*, is given to nearly all

words ending in *t*, by negroes; as, *postes, ghostes, hostes*, etc., for *posts, ghosts, hosts*.

Et and **Eat** (et and it). Both of these forms are employed for *ate* by both educated and uneducated people to a very large extent. *Et* is probably used more than *eat*.

Every and **Ever** (evri and evə). A strange confusion of these two words exists in the speech of the uneducated; they say: "every since" and "ever man"; e.g. "She has been here every since I can remember," "He hit ever man in the crowd."

F.

Fashion (fæʃn). This word is sometimes used by illiterate whites for *habit*. An old man once told me that it was always his fashion to shake his head during the preaching if he did not agree with the minister.

Fat (fæt). A word used in the game of marbles called ring-men. If a player's *taw* stops in the ring, it is said to be *fat*. Used also in District of Columbia.

Favor (fêvə). In the sense of *to resemble*, Webster marks this word as obsolete, but it is still very largely used, with this meaning, by all classes of Mississippians.

Fee-lark (fi-lark). The common name for *meadow-lark*, used by all classes in Mississippi. It is a corruption of *field-lark*.

Feels his oats (filz iz ôtʒ). Used by all classes. A horse is said to *feel his oats* when he frisks and prances around. In Mississippi, as in New England, it is also applied to persons that are frisky and sometimes to those that are self-conceited: in the latter sense it is equivalent to *feels his importance*. This phrase is used also in England and Ireland. A phrase used in Germany with essentially the same meaning is, *ihm sticht der Hafer*.

Feesh (fiʃ). Illiterate white and negro pronunciation of *fish*.

Fisticuff (fistik-ʌf). Illiterate white for fighting with the fists. As a noun the word is common in the United States, but I have never heard of its being used as a verb elsewhere than in Mississippi.

Fit (fit). Negro for *fought*. *Fout* (faut) is also used for *fought* by negroes. *Fit* is also used in West Virginia and Tennessee.

Fitten (fitn). This is used by illiterate whites for *fit*. They seem to confuse the adjective with an imaginary strong participle of the verb *to fit*, or it may possibly be the word *fitting* with the *g* unpronounced.

Fit to kill (fit tə kil). Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *excessively*; as, He laughed *fit to kill*; i.e. immoderately.

Flesh crawl (flef krol). When cold chills run over one, especially if caused by some harsh or grating noise, one's flesh is said to crawl. In the greater portion of the United States the word *creep* is used instead of *crawl*.

Flugins (flûdizɪnz). A word used to some extent by all classes, generally in the following connection: "It is as cold as flugins." I do not know either the origin or the exact meaning of the term; it seems to be merely an intensive. I find no record of its use elsewhere.

Flummergasted (fl:əmærgæsted). Used by illiterate whites for *embarrassed*, or *befuddled*. In their parlance a man sometimes becomes *flummergasted* when he rises to make a speech, and so forgets what he wishes to say.

Flustrate (flæstrêt). This word is used, even by educated people, instead of *fluster*, and has the same meaning.

Fly up the creek (flai ʊp ði kri:k). This is quite a common term among the illiterate whites for a *shallow, silly person*.

For (fə). This preposition is still largely used by illiterate whites before an infinitive of purpose. "They say he went for to see"; "He hit for to kill." As is very well known, this use of *for* was extremely common in the earlier periods of the language; and, in fact, has not very long been obsolete, being commonly used in the Bible.

For keeps (fə kîpz). A common phrase which boys use in playing marbles. In playing *for keeps*, each player puts a certain number of marbles in a ring, and each keeps all that he knocks out.

Fotch (fotʃ). Negro for *fetch* and *fetched*.

Fox-fire (foks faîə). Used by all classes for the phosphorescent glow that decayed wood sometimes emits after a season of rainy weather. Used also in Kentucky. It is probably a corruption of *phosphor*.

Fox-grape (foks-grêp). Bartlett makes the following note on this word: "(*Vitis labrusca*). A large grape common on the borders of streams. The surface of the leaf is characterized by its foxy pubescence. The Southern fox-grape is *vitis vulpina*. Its fruit is larger and its taste more agreeable than the former."

, The grape, commonly called *fox-grape* in Mississippi, is

very small and very sour. It is called also *coon-grape* and *possum-grape*.

Frail (frêl). Used by all classes to mean *to whip*, *to beat*. A father says to his son: "If you don't stop that, I will *frail* you until you can't sit down." Webster gives *frail* as a noun, meaning a "rush for weaving baskets," and this noun may have been converted into a verb, especially since the whipping, or *frailing*, is generally done with a rush or switch.

Frazzle (fræzl). Used especially by negroes, and sometimes by white people, to mean *to fray*, *to ravel*, or, in fact, to *wear out* in almost any way. It has two meanings, different, though in some respects allied; for instance, if a switch be worn into shreds on some one, the switch is said to be *frazzled*, and the person whipped is also said to be *frazzled*; hence the word also means *to whip*. With the meaning of *to fray* it is also used in Kentucky. The word may be related to *frizzle*.

Frez (frez). Negro for *froze* and *frozen*. "I nearly *frez* to death," "He shivered like he was *frez*."

Froo (frû). A negro pronunciation of *through*.

Fudge (fedʒ). Used by boys in playing marbles. A player is said to *fudge* when he reaches further toward the marble that he is shooting at than the position of his *taw* justifies. Used also in Kentucky.

Fum (fəm). Negro for *from*.

Fun (fən). Used by all classes as a verb, meaning *to joke* or *jest*. Used also in New England, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

Funny-bone (fəni'bôn). A name used in Mississippi by all classes to mean that particular bone in the elbow that is generally called *crazy-bone* in the other parts of the United States.

Fust (fest). Negro for *first*. The final *t* is sometimes unpronounced, so as to make *fus*.

G.

G. Final *g* in present participles, or in any other words ending in *ing*, is nearly always omitted in the pronunciation by all classes.

G and **C.** The pronunciation of *c* and *g*, as if followed by a vocalic *y* just before the letter *a*, is of frequent occurrence in

the language of the lower classes of Mississippi, and is sometimes heard even in the conversation of cultivated people. I think that this pronunciation came originally from Virginia and South Carolina. Examples of it are: *gyarden* for *garden*; *cyar* for *car*; *segyar* for *cigar*. This *ya* sound may, I think, be regarded as the result of the breaking of the *a* owing to the palatal immediately preceding.

Gal (gael). Girl. This word is by no means confined to Mississippi, but it is so generally used by the uneducated classes, both white and black, that I think it worthy of mention.

Galluses (gæləsez). The common name among negroes and uneducated whites for *suspenders*. Bartlett says that this word, spelled *gallowses*, is also used in England. I suppose that this word is derived from *gallows*, which, of course, is used for hanging criminals, and that the term has been applied to suspenders because they are used to suspend trousers.

Garden-sass (gadn-sæs). Used by negroes and illiterate whites for *vegetables*. It means exactly the same as *garden-truck*, which is a well-known term.

Gass (gæs). Used by all classes to mean *to talk familiarly, foolishly, or in an exaggerated manner*. Women *gass* about their neighbors; farmers *gass* about the crops, politics, etc. A man's conversation is disparaged when it is said that he was only *gassing*.

Gater (gêto). Negro for *alligator*.

Gawd (god). Negro and illiterate white for *God*.

Gee Whiz! and **Gee Whittaker!** (dʒi hwiz and dʒi hwittaker). Exclamation of surprise, used by all classes. Both of these expressions are used in Cincinnati, and the latter in New England also. Their origin is obscure. Professor Hart suggests that *gee* is from *Jesus*.

Gemman (dʒemən). Negro for *gentleman*.

Get off (get of). Used by illiterate whites to mean *to acquit one's self well in any undertaking*; as, "Mr. Smith did not get off in that speech like he usually does"; i.e. did not do himself as much credit as usual. This use of *get off* is entirely different from that meaning *to say*; as, "He got off the speech well"; the first being intransitive, the second transitive.

Get up and dust (get ʊp æn dʌst). An expression, used mainly

by negroes, meaning to leave in a great hurry, to go away swiftly. The past tense is *got up and dusted*. This expression occurs also in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Gimme (gimi). Negro for *give me*. This should, most probably, be written *gi' me*, showing the contraction of *give*, which is almost, if not quite, identical with the Scotch abbreviation of the same word.

Gin (gin). A negro form for *gave*.

Ginral (dʒinrəl). Negro for *general*, both noun and adjective. *Ginerly* (dʒinəli) is the negro pronunciation of *generally*.

Git (git). Used to a large extent, by all classes, for *get*.

Gittin place (gitn plēs). The general name for the place where anything has been, or can be, obtained, used by negroes and illiterate whites in the following connection: "Whar did yo' git dem cloze, nigger?" "Got em at de *gittin place*." This is meant as a witty retort, and is said in order to crush the questioner and stop further inquiries.

Give (giv). Used even by educated people for *gave*.

Give a fry off of one's liver (giv ə frai of ɒv wɛnz livə). This phrase is used by negroes to indicate a very great desire for something; as, "She would *give a fry off of her liver* for that house."

Give me a lief (giv mi ə lif). This expression is used principally by boys; and, when nothing else is added, it means *allow me to throw at you*. However, it is very generally employed as equivalent to *give me permission*, and the thing asked to be permitted, of course, naturally follows. This use of *lief* is, I suppose, merely a corruption of *leave*.

Give one scissors (giv wɛn sizəz). Used by illiterate whites to mean *to score one severely, to lash with the tongue*. They say when a speaker severely assails some one: "He gave him scissors, didn't he?"

Go a gilpin (gō ə gilpin). Used by all to mean *to go fast*. Dr. Brown explains this expression in the following words: "To *go gilpin* is a common expression which I take to be derived from the story of 'John Gilpin's Ride.'" In Mississippi the phrase is never used without the insertion of *a* between *go* and *gilpin*. It may be a corruption of *go-a-gallop*ing or *go-a-yelp*ing.

Go a kitin (gō ə kaitin). This, as noted by Dr. Brown, means about the same thing as to *go a gilpin*; i.e. to go fast.

Dr. Brown thinks that it originally meant to go like a kite.

Goody (gudi). Used by all classes for the edible kernel of any kind of nut. The exclamatory *goody*, denoting gratification, is also used in Mississippi.

Ground-hog case (graun høg kês). This might be classed under the head of slang. It is used by all classes in Mississippi. It means *the last resort, the ultimatum*; as, "Do you suppose that he will succeed this time?" "He has to, it is a *ground-hog case* with him."

Growed (grôd). Negro for *grew*.

Gruntin (grētn). Negro and illiterate white for *unwell*, but *not dangerously sick*; as, "Mr. Jones is still *gruntin* this morning"; i.e. Mr. Jones is still somewhat ill. *Complainin'* is used with the same meaning. This acquired meaning of these two words can be easily accounted for, as one who is slightly ill nearly always either grunts or complains or does both.

Guv (gev). A negro form for *gave*.

Gwine (gwain). The common negro form for *going*. Used throughout the South.

Gyardeen (gya'dîn). Illiterate white for *guardian*. Bartlett says that this pronunciation is used also in New England, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. *Gadeen* (gadîn) is used in Kentucky. Professor M. G. Daniell, of New England, says: "I find the word spelled *guardeen* in a Suffolk (Mass.) probate document dated April 14, 1761."

H.

Hade (hêd). Negro for *head*.

Hain't (hênt). Used by illiterate whites to mean: *is not, are not, am not, has not, and have not*. In New England, it means *am not*.

Half and half (hæf æn hæf). This expression is used in England to mean a mixture of equal parts of two kinds of liquor or of half liquor and half water, but I have never heard of its being used for a mixture of half molasses and half coffee anywhere else than among the illiterate whites of the backwoods districts of Mississippi.

Hand-write (hænd rait). For *hand-writing*. Bartlett notices this as "a common barbarism at the South," and I think it is especially common among the illiterate whites of Mis-

Mississippi, who very rarely indeed use the correct form *hand-writing*.

Hant (hænt). This word is, of course, a corruption of *haunt*, and is used by the negroes of Mississippi both as a noun and as a verb. As a noun, it means a *spectre* or *ghost*; as a verb, it means *to frequent as a spectre or ghost*. Not only places but also persons may be *hanted*. It is quite a common saying among negroes: "If a man wus tuh kill me, I'd hant him to death." The noun is used in Kentucky, and, in fact, I think that both meanings are known wherever our colored brother has wandered.

Happify (hæpifai). Used by illiterate whites to mean *to make happy*. According to Bartlett, it is used also in New England.

Har (ha). Negro for *hair*.

Hattuh (hætə). Negro for *have to*, in the sense of being under obligation to do. *Haf to* (hæf) is used in Cincinnati, New England, Philadelphia. *Hafter*, in Kentucky.

Have did (hæv did). In trying to be correct, negroes sometimes use this instead of *have done*. However, the confusion of the past tense and past participle is so common with negroes and illiterate whites that I shall not attempt to make anything like an exhaustive enumeration of the instances of it. But I shall try to notice the most common and most striking examples.

Have it (hæv it). Used by all classes for *to fight* or *quarrel*; as, "He and his wife had it up and down all day long"; "They talked until their patience gave out and then they *had it*." The phrase *up and down* is very frequently joined to this expression, and seems to imply that the fight or quarrel was a thorough and complete one.

He (hī). The almost universal use of the third person pronoun after names by illiterate whites of Mississippi should be noted. They very rarely say that John or Susan did it, but nearly always "John he" or "Susan she" did it. I know that this error is very common in other places, but it is so largely used here, that I have thought it best to mention it.

Head over heels (hed ovə hīlz). The phrase *heels over head* is changed to *head over heels*; the first is rarely or never heard in Mississippi. There seems to be an exact parallel for this in Germany; in northeastern Germany the phrase *Hals über Kopf*, neck over head, is altered to *Kopf über Hals*, head over

neck, these phrases meaning the same thing as *heels over head* or *head over heels*.

Heap (hîp). Used by all classes to mean, a *large amount*, a *great deal*, to a *great degree*: "I saw a heap of men"; "There was a heap of fun"; "I like him a heap." Bartlett notices this word with these meanings, but as it is so very common in Mississippi, I have ventured to embody it in this thesis. He also says that this use of *heap*, except as an adverb, is heard in England, and is regarded there as a vulgarism.

Hearn (hërn). Illiterate white for *heard*. Bartlett says that it is common in the United States.

Heben (hebn). Negro for *heaven*.

Hed (hed). Frequently used by negroes for *had*.

Heeyrd (hyiəd). Negro and illiterate white for *heard*.

Hellion (helyən). Used by all classes to mean a wild, reckless, daredevil person, and is of course derived from *hell*. At first it probably meant inhabitant of *hell*. It is also used in Massachusetts, and is thus explained in "Dialect Notes."

Help-meat (help-mît). Illiterate white for *help-meet*. The ignorant classes seem to think that this term is a compound word, and that it is applied to husband or wife, because it is the duty of each to help the other obtain meat, i.e. sustenance, for the family. As is well known the words mean *help* suitable or proper.

Hender (hendə). This is always used by negroes for *hinder*. It is heard also in Louisiana and New England.

Hep (hep). This pronunciation of *help* is quite frequently used by people of all classes. This is heard also in Tennessee. *Sef*, as a contraction for *self*, likewise occurs in both states.

Hilt (hilt). Negroes and illiterate whites frequently use this word for *held*. They also say *helt*.

Hime (haim). This pronunciation of *hymn* is frequently used in Mississippi by the illiterate whites. It was formerly used also in Kentucky, but is now becoming rare there.

Hit (hit). Very frequently used by negroes and illiterate whites for *it*. I cannot say whether it is the A.-S. word retained or not; however, it is identical in form with A.-S. *hit*, meaning *it*. I think it is rather to be attributed to cockney influence.

Hitch (hitf). Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *to come together in a fight*. They say: "If you don't stop your projickin, me and you will *hitch*."

- Ho** (hô). Sometimes used by clerks in dry-goods stores to mean *one of a pair of hose, one stocking*. This usage is, however, not very general.
- Hoe** (hô). A name for a culinary utensil, a kind of skillet without sides. In this are baked *hoe-cakes*. Bartlett says that these cakes are so called because they are baked on hoes, the agricultural implements, in some of the interior parts of the country where cooking-vessels are scarce. If this be true, I suppose that *hoe*, the skillet, is derived through *hoe-cake* from *hoe*, the agricultural tool, as the cakes baked on the cooking-vessels are of the same kind as those that Bartlett says are baked on the tools.
- Holt** (hôlt). This pronunciation of the noun *hold* is heard among all classes. Used also in Tennessee and Canada.
- Hone** (hôn). Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *to desire strongly, to yearn for*. This word is marked obsolete in Webster, but is very frequently heard among the lower classes of Mississippi, and even educated people sometimes use it. An old preacher of Copiah County, a rather intelligent man, was once heard to say in a sermon: "If a penitent gets religion, he must *hone* for it." A state senator from the same county was heard to use the same word.
- Hongry** (honri). Negro for *hungry*.
- Hooley** (hu-i). The sound used to drive cows out of one's way. It is probably a corruption of *hurry*. The Southern pronunciation of *r* is not at all distinct; and if this be taken into account, we have the two sounds (*hu-i*) and (*hv-i*) almost the same. And as a matter of fact (*hu-i*) is very frequently pronounced almost exactly (*hv-i*).
- Hoop-hooee** (hûp-hûî). This represents, as nearly as I can represent it, the sound made by farmers in calling hogs. The accent is equally emphatic on each syllable of the word.
- Hope** (hôp). Negroes use this pronunciation of *help*, which they employ for *help* and *helped*; sometimes, however, they form a past tense *holped* (hôped) from the present *holp*. In this word the negroes preserve the vowel *o* of the past tense of the A.-S. strong verb *helpan*, but on this strong stem they sometimes form a weak past and past participle, as mentioned above. *Holp* is used also in Louisiana. Bartlett says the word *holp* is heard in Virginia and New England, and in Virginia *holped* also is used.

Horse for (həs fə). Used by the lower orders of society to mean *to long for, to earnestly desire*. It is evidently derived from a mare's desiring the stallion, as she is then said to be *horsing*. Having sprung from this origin, the expression *to horse for* now has as wide application as the word *desire*; in the parlance of negroes and illiterate whites, a man, woman, or child may *horse for* anything.

Hospittle (hosp-ɪtl). Negroes and illiterate whites always accent *hospital* on the second syllable, so as to make it sound as if spelled *hospittle*.

Hoss (həs). Illiterate white for *horse*. This pronunciation is common in many parts of the United States.

Huff (hʌf). Negro and illiterate white for *hoof*.

Hum (həm). Used by all classes to mean *to succeed, to prosper*; as, "He made the business hum."

This meaning is doubtless derived from the idea of putting in rapid motion, as any object moving rapidly generally makes a humming noise, and as rapid progress is nearly always a fundamental element of success.

Human (hyūmən). Illiterate white for *human being*. This class goes so far as to give the word a plural—*humans*. Bartlett says that this word is used in this sense also in the West, and sometimes even in the East.

Hummer (həmə). Used by all classes to mean something that possesses a great degree of excellence; as, "That horse is a *hummer*"; i.e. an extremely good one.

Hurrah (herə). I once knew an old negro cook who always said *hurrah* for *hurry* or *hurry up*. She would tell her assistant to "hurrah now and less git thoo." I have since found out that this word is quite common both with negroes and illiterate whites.

Hurus (heres). Illiterate white for *hearse*.

Hurted (hɜrtəd). Used by illiterate whites for the past tense of *to hurt*; as, "I hurted myself." I think this form is found also in other states.

Hurth (hɜrp). Illiterate white pronunciation of *hearth*.

I.

I. The letter *i* in the middle of such words as *testify* and *amplify* is pronounced by all classes as (ə); as, (æmpləfai), etc.

I and E. The sounds of these letters are confused by all classes

to a considerable extent, but, of course, to a larger degree by the uneducated; as, *pen* for *pin*, or *vice versa*; *trimble* for *tremble*; *set* for *sit*, or *vice versa*; etc.

Idea (ˈaidiə). This word has two or three different pronunciations among the various classes of people. The educated people generally pronounce it with the accent on the first syllable. Negroes and illiterate whites say *idy* and *idee* (ˈaidi and aidɪ).

Ijit (idʒit). Negro for *idiot*.

Ile (ail). Negro for *oil*.

Infair (infēr). Used by the illiterate whites of South Mississippi to mean a party or dance somewhat more elaborate than a *shindig*. It is not at all restricted to the meaning that Bartlett gives, although it does have that meaning.

Injine (indʒain). This pronunciation of *engine*, although heard in other parts of the United States, is almost universal among negroes and illiterate whites of Mississippi. It is especially common also in Kentucky.

Inquiry (ˈinkwiri). Used by educated people for (ˈinkwˈairi). Nearly everybody accents the word on the first syllable.

Inshoance (inʃōəns). A corruption of *insurance*. Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *assurance* in the sense of *boldness*, *impudence*. They would say: "He had the inshoance to ask me to give him my last dollar."

Instid (instid). Negro and illiterate white for *instead*.

Insult (insʌlt). The word is pronounced with a very strong accent on the second syllable, and is used quite frequently by negroes for *consult*; as, "I insulted him, and took his advice."

Intrust (intrəs). Negro for *interest*. Dr. Brown says that, in Tennessee, this word is used for *interest* in the commercial sense, but that he does not know whether or not it is used in any other. I can say that, in Mississippi, it is used in every sense of *interest*. Negroes say: "When I makes a bargain, I always looks atter my own *intrusts*."

Is (iz). The verb *to be* is largely used, by negroes, in the place of the auxiliary *to have*; as, "He is got a store"; "I is had it." *Is* is much more frequently used in this sense than any other form of the verb *to be*, and generally takes the place of *has*. Even when the subject is in the first person, the verb is generally put in the third. *Ain't* is likewise used in the place of *have not* or *has not*.

J.

Jack (dʒæk). The word employed by the students of the University of Mississippi for a translation of classical authors. This word is used to mean exactly what *pony* does at most other colleges. I know not why the *pony* has been changed to *jack* at this university, unless it may be that the beast, having been ridden so long and so constantly, has come to be unworthy of any name other than that of the patient, long-suffering donkey.

From this word has been formed the verb *to jack*, used both transitively and intransitively. One boy is said *to jack* another in recitation or examination when he tells him the answer to any question. A student is said *to jack* when he looks on his book or copies from another student's work during recitation or examination.

The noun *jack* is extended to mean illegal help of any kind on recitation or examination; e.g. an answer or solution to any kind of question is called a *jack*, if that answer be written down.

Jell (dʒel). A verb used by all classes to mean *to become jellied*. It is used also in South Carolina, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The meaning of this word can be readily understood from the following examples: "Apples *jell* readily"; "I have put the fruit on the fire, but it has not *jelled* yet."

Jenny (dʒeni). Used by all classes for *jennet*. I don't think I ever heard a dozen people say *jennet*. It is almost without exception *jenny*, or, if not that, *jinny* (dʒini).

Jew (dʒyû). Negro for *dew*. *Jew* is also used as a verb, and then means to make one lower the price of anything. The adverb *down* is nearly always put directly after *jew* when it is thus used. Examples of this use are: "I *jewed* him down from a dollar to fifty cents"; "He tried ever so long, but he couldn't *jew* me down a cent." This verb is probably derived from *Jew*, meaning an Israelite, and has acquired its meaning from the well-known shrewdness of that nation in trading. This explanation coincides with that of the Century Dictionary. *Jew* is also used for *due* by negroes.

Jew-Larky (dʒyû l'arki). Sometimes used by negroes and illiterate whites for *sweet-heart*. This word is generally applied

to the female sex, but it sometimes has reference also to the male. The word is used also in Kentucky.

Jim-jams (dʒim-dʒæmz). Bartlett says that this word is used for *delirium tremens* in Kentucky. It is the common name for that disease in Mississippi.

Jim-swinger (dʒim swêŋə). The common negro name for a *Prince Albert coat*.

Jine (dʒain). Negro and illiterate white for *join*. Common throughout the South.

Jinerwary (dʒinəwəri). Negro for *January*.

Jodarter (dʒôd·atə). Negroes and illiterate whites frequently use this word to express something unsurpassed in its way; as, "That man is a *jodarter*"; i.e. in some way he is unsurpassable. A negro, speaking to me of a chill that he had, said, "It sho was a *jodarter*," meaning that it was one of the very worst kind.

Joog (dʒûg). Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *to punch* or *poke*; as, "I *jooged* the hornet-nest with a pole."

June (dʒûn). A word used by all classes to mean *to get along*, *to progress*; as, "He made that horse *june*." It also means to make a humming noise, as is made by a body moving or revolving swiftly; and I am inclined to think that the meaning first mentioned is derived from this: a nail, when thrown through the air, is said to *june*. There is a certain kind of bugs called *june-bugs*, because they make a peculiar humming noise with their wings when they are tied with a string. These bugs form one of the favorite playthings of Mississippi children.

Just (dʒɛst). The forms for this word (adv.) are so various that I have ventured to put the correct word first, and classify its mutilations under it. *Jist*, *jest*, *dēs*, *jis*, and *jēs* (dʒist, dʒest, dɛs, dʒis, dʒes), are all used by negroes and illiterate whites for *just*. *Dēs* is used almost exclusively by negroes, while *jēs* is sometimes heard in the conversation of educated people. The final *t* of *just* is very frequently omitted by all classes, so as to leave *jus*'.

K.

Kaze (kêz). Negro for *because*.

Keer (kîə). Illiterate white and negro for *care*.

Kep (kep). Used to a large extent by all classes for *kept*.

Kerflummux (kæf·ʌmɨks). Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *to collapse, to be entirely overcome*; as, "I sho was kerflummuxed when dat aig struck me," a colored speaker who has been rotten-egged, might say. This word, however, is not in very general use in Mississippi. *Kerflummux* is used in some parts of New England as an adverb; as, to fall *kerflummux*. Bartlett gives the word *flummux*, which means "to give in, to give up, to die."

Kerrige (keridʒ). Negro for *carriage*.

Kilt (kilt). Negro for *killed*, the negroes in this instance using a pronunciation identical with the Irish.

Kin (kin). Negro and illiterate white for *can*, used as a verb.

Kinfolks (kinfôks). Webster notes *kingsfolk* as obsolete, but neither he nor Bartlett gives *kinfolks* at all. *Kinfolks* is the common term for kindred (noun) used by all classes in Mississippi.

Kinnery (kinəri). Used by negroes and illiterate whites for the whole number of one's kindred or relations; as, "I hates my kinnery, dey is all low down trash." *Kinry* is used in Louisiana with the same meaning.

Kiver (kivə). Negro for *cover*. Used also in Tennessee.

Knock down with a feather. An expression used by all classes with reference to a person completely overcome with surprise; as, "When Jim came walking up there, you could have *knocked me down with a feather*, because I thought he had been dead for years." This expression, of course, refers to one's weakened physical condition when so surprised.

Knowned (nôd). Negro and illiterate white for *knew*.

Knows on (nôz ɔn). Illiterate white and negro for *know of*. They say: "Not as I knows on."

Kotch (kotʃ). Negro for *caught*. Used over almost the whole South.

Kritter (kritə). Negro and illiterate white for *creature*, applied to four-footed animals of all kinds, but especially to horses. This word is used with the same meaning in many portions of the United States.

Kunjerism (kændʒərism). Negro for *conjuratation*, meaning enchantment.

Kyore (kyôə). Negro and illiterate white for *cure*.

L.

Larn (larn). Negro and illiterate white for *learn*.

Lasses (lases). Negro and illiterate white for *molasses*.

Lawd (lod). Negro and illiterate white for *lord*.

Lay off (lê of). Means *to intend*; used by all classes; as, "I *lay off* to go away to-morrow." Bartlett gives *lay out* this meaning, but it is not so used in Mississippi, at least to any great extent. *Lay off* is used in Tennessee.

Learn (lern). Largely used by all classes for *teach*. The word is given in Webster, but is marked "improper and inelegant."

Lebenty-lebem (lebnti-lebm). Negro pronunciation for *eleventy-eleven*, an expression for an indefinitely great number.

Led (led). Negro for *lid*. Used also in Massachusetts.

Let the old cat die. An expression used by all classes, meaning to let a swing come to rest of its own accord. Heard also in Massachusetts and in various other parts of the United States.

Liberry (laiberi). Negro for *library*.

Lickerish (likərɪʃ). Negro and illiterate white for *licorice*. Used also in New England.

Licksillet (likskilit). Used by illiterate whites to mean a *contemptible or detestable person*.

Lie (lai). Very frequently confused with its causative *lay* by all classes of people.

Light'ud (laitud). Used for *light-wood* by the negroes and illiterate whites of the pine districts of Mississippi.

Like to have done it. Used by educated classes to mean *to have come very near doing it*. Uneducated people say, "Like to done it." By these examples I mean to show that some of our best people use the perfect infinitive after *like*, and that the ignorant use the past participle. Any verb may be used as *do* is in the examples.

Long-sweetening (lɔŋ-swɪtnɪŋ). Bartlett says that this word formerly meant *molasses* in New England. It is still used by the illiterate whites of Mississippi in this sense. To this day that class of people in this State ask their guest: whether he will have *long-sweetening* or *short-sweetening* in his coffee; i.e. will he take *molasses* or *sugar*.

Long ways (lɔŋ wêʒ). *Long ways* and *short ways* are used by all classes for *long way* and *short way*; for instance, they say: "Europe is a long ways from here." This use of *ways* is

probably derived from the adverbial use of the A.-S. *weges*, the genitive case of *weg*. Bartlett gives this expression as a very common vulgarism in the United States, but does not attempt to account for its origin. *Somewheres* and *nowheres* are like examples of the adverbial use of the A.-S. genitive.

Lot (lot). This word is used to a considerable extent by all classes to mean *stable-yard* or *horse-lot*. If one is told that anything is in the *lot*, he is to understand that it is in the same enclosure as the stables.

Lots (lotz). This word is used by all classes to mean *a large number*, *a large quantity*, *greatly*. Bartlett gives the word, but mentions only *a large number* as its meaning. In Mississippi we say: "Lots of men"; "Lots of paper"; and "I love him lots."

Low (lan). For *allow*; used by negroes to mean *say*, *think*, or *expect*; as in "Dat's what I lowed"; i.e. "That is what I thought, said, or expected." This word is used also in Kentucky.

M.

Make one's self skase (skês). A negro form of the phrase, *make one's self scarce*, given by Bartlett. It means *to depart*, *to decamp*, *to get away*.

Mammy (mæmi). A word used by negro children for *mother*. It is, of course, a corruption of *mamma*. *Mammy* is also used by white children when speaking of their old black nurses. *Ma* (ma) and *maw* (mæ) are also frequently used for *mother*, the first generally by educated, the second by uneducated, people.

Mar (ma). Negro and illiterate white for *mare*.

Mare (mæə). Negro for *mayor*. This is pronounced exactly as the correct pronunciation of *mare*, a female horse.

Marm (marm). Illiterate white for *madam*; as, "Yes, marm, I think so, marm."

Mars (mâs). Negro form for *master*. *Marster* (mâstə) is also used with the same meaning.

Massasip (mæsəsip). Sometimes used by negroes and illiterate whites for *Mississippi*.

Mejure (medʒə). Negro for *measure*.

Melt (melt). The *mill* of hogs is always thus pronounced by all classes. Bartlett says that by the *melt* of a hog the mesentery is meant.

Menses (menzez). Sometimes used by illiterate whites for *men*. An uneducated old white woman once invited a party of my friends to dinner by saying: "Menses, take a seat and have some of the fry."

Meracle (merik-l). Negro and illiterate white for *miracle*. This pronunciation is also heard in Louisiana among settlers of English descent. *Maracle* (mêark-l) is also sometimes used by the lower classes of Mississippi.

Middle of next week. This expression is used to some extent by all classes in such connection as the following: "If you don't let me alone, I'll knock you into the middle of next week."

Middling (midlin). In moderately good health, used mostly by negroes and illiterate whites. *Tollible* has about the same meaning and is a corruption of *tolerable*. The following dialogue may well be supposed to take place between two negroes inquiring about each other's health: "How is yo', Brer Jeems?" — "Jist *middlin'*, Brer Bill. How is you?" — "I is *tollible*, tank God, but my ole oman is *poly*."

Bartlett says that *middling*, in this sense, is very common in the United States, and according to Brockett it is used also in the north of England.

Middling meat (midlin mit). Bartlett says that this expression is common in the West for pork, and means the portion of the animal between its hams and shoulders. This is exactly the use of *middling* or *middling meat* in Mississippi. The *meat* is sometimes written after *middling*, sometimes not.

Midget (midʒit). According to Bartlett this word is used in Canada to mean the *sand-fly*. In Mississippi it means anything very small, and is, probably, merely an extension of the Canada meaning. In this State all classes speak of a small man, woman, horse, dog, or anything as being a perfect *midget*, or nothing but a *midget*.

Mighty (maiti). Very, exceedingly. This word is given by both Webster and Bartlett as colloquial in the United States. I mention it here because its use in this sense is so very common among all classes of Mississippians.

Millineer (milinfə). Illiterate white pronunciation of *millionnaire*.

Million (milyun). Negro for *melon*.

Mind (maind). This word is used by all classes to mean *to object to*; as, "I don't mind that"; i.e. "I have no objection to

that." This meaning of *mind* probably springs from its regular meaning *to notice*, as there is not a very broad gap between "I don't object to that" and "I don't notice that"; for a man certainly cannot object very strongly to anything that he thinks unworthy of his notice.

Mirate (mairêt). This word is used by negroes to mean *to wonder*, and I suppose, is connected with *admire*, as it can very easily be derived from the same Latin primitive *mirari*. From this is derived the noun *miration*, which means *wonderment, bustle, stir, commotion*; as, "Dem niggers sho made a great *miration* 'bout dat rock dat drapped out de sky."

Misery (mizri). Negro for a pain or ache of any kind in any part of the body. Negroes say: "I've got a *misery* in my head, foot, tooth," etc. When, however, the word *misery* is used not followed by the name of any portion of the body, it refers to *stomach-ache*. When suffering from this ailment, negroes commonly say: "I've got a *misery*," or by a strange transposition, "I've got a pain across my *misery*," where *misery* means stomach.

Miss (mis). Negro for *mistress*. They say "ole Miss" for "old mistress," "Miss Smith" for Mrs. Smith.

Molly Har (moli ha). A hare. The word occurs in the following stanza of a well-known negro song:—

"Ole Molly Har, what you doin' dar,
Er rippin' thoo de cotton fiel' as hard as you kin tar?"

Mouf (mauf). Negro for *mouth*.

Mought (maut). Negro for *might* (verb). Used also in Louisiana and Kentucky.

Moughty (mauti). Illiterate white and negro for *mighty*, meaning *very, excessively, exceedingly*.

Muel (myûel). Frequently used by negroes for *mule*.

Muffles (mef-lz). I have heard this word used only once, or, at least, by but one person. I knew a negro cook who used to call waffles, *muffles*. She seemed to have confused the words *waffles* and *muffins*, and in this way produced a hybrid—*muffles*.

Muscumdime (mæskæmdaim). Negro for *muscadine*.

Musmelon or **Mushmelon** (mæsmel-n or mēsmel-n). The common names for the *musk-melon*. *Mushmelon* is used mostly by uneducated people. These pronunciations are heard in New York, New Jersey, and New England.

Mussy (məsi). Negro for *mercy*. *Lawdy-mussy* is a favorite exclamation among the negroes, and even to some extent among the whites. It, of course, means "Lord, have mercy!"

N.

Nable (nêb-l). Negro and illiterate white for *navel*. Heard also in Massachusetts.

Nary (nəri). Used by negroes and illiterate whites for *ne'er a*; as, "I ain't seen nary man dis year," i.e. "I have seen ne'er a man." *Nary* is nearly always used by these classes of people instead of *not a single*, *not any*. Just as *ary*, *nary* always follows a negative; but, of course, the employment of a double negative is not unusual among the uneducated.

Natcherly, (nætʃəli). Negro for *naturally*.

Navigate (naivigêt). This word is used by negroes to mean *to loiter*, *to linger around*, *to hang about*; as, "Dey was navigatin' about hyar all summer." In this use of the word there is no reference whatever either to the sea or to ships.

Needer (nîdə). Negro for *neither*. *Nuther* (nəðə) is another form very largely used by negroes for *neither*. *Nuther* is generally employed at the end of sentences in constructions like the following: "No, I didn't do it *nuther*"; "An' I ain't goin' *nuther*"; etc.

Nigger (nigə). The common pronunciation of *negro* by all classes of people. *Nigro* is sometimes used by educated people.

Nigh (nai). This word, although almost archaic in modern book-English, is still in very general use among the lower classes of Mississippi.

Nigh onto death. Illiterate white for *very near to death*; as, "Nancy had the colic *nigh onto death* last week."

Noggin (nəgin). Very frequently used by illiterate whites for *head*; i.e. the head of an animal. English settlers in Louisiana use it as a semi-slang term.

Norate (nôret). To make widely known, to spread abroad, as of a rumor or report. In this sense it is used by educated people as well as by illiterate.

Not much shakes (ʃêkz). Used by illiterate whites to mean *of no great worth* or *value*. When wishing to disparage any man, they say: "He ain't much shakes nohow." Bartlett gives a parallel expression, *no great shakes*, which he says is common in England as well as in the United States.

Nuffin (nəfn). Negro for *nothing*.

O.

O (ə). The pronunciation of this letter, short *o*, as *aw*, is very common in a large number of words, and is used by all classes. *Coffee* is pronounced (cəfi); *office*, (əfis); *log*, (log); *dog*, (dəg); etc.

Of (ɛv). Illiterate whites almost always use this preposition before the past participle when forming a part of the complete past of a verb, in the antecedent clause of a conditional sentence. They say: "Ef I had of known"; "Ef he had of died"; "Ef they had of thought." This *of* sound is not a contraction of the well-known barbarism *had have* died, thought, known, etc.; for in three written exercises handed in to me by students of the University of Mississippi, at one time, the *of* occurs spelled out, as given above.

Offen (ɔfn). Negro and illiterate white for *off of*, exactly analogous to *outen* for *out of*. *Offen* is used also in Vermont.

Oi. This diphthong is pronounced by negroes as long *i* (ai), in (jaist) for *joist*, (haist) for *hoist*, (spail) for *spoil*, (bail) for *boil*. However, in *voice* and *moist* and some other words, it is given the correct pronunciation.

Ole 'oman (əl um-n). A common name for *wife*, among illiterate whites and negroes.

Onery (onəri). Used to some extent by all classes to mean *extremely ordinary*, *poor*, *mean*. Used also in Kentucky, Middle States, and New England.

Onliest (ônliest). Superlative of *only*, used mostly by negroes. Heard also among the ignorant classes in Louisiana.

Only (ônli). Some well-educated people make a point of pronouncing this word with short *o* (onli).

Ort (ort). Illiterate white for *ought*.

Ouch (autʃ). An exclamation denoting pain, used by all classes. Heard also in New England.

Outen (autn). Negro and illiterate white for *out of*.

Overhet (ôvəh:et). Negro for *overheated*; as, "De sun was so hot yistiddy dat I got overhet." This word is common in the Northern and Eastern States and in Louisiana.

Owdacious (audêʃəs). Negro and illiterate white pronunciation of *audacious*.

Oxen (oksn). This form is largely used, even by educated people, for *ox*; i.e. a single one.

P.

Pack (pæk). Used to some extent by all classes to mean *to carry*. Heard also in Kentucky, Louisiana, Idaho, Montana, and Washington State.

Pant (pænt). An abbreviation of *pantaloons*, used by clerks in dry-goods stores. They say: "I have a pant that I can sell you," etc. Of course, *pants* is a well-known abbreviation, but I think *pant* is rather a new word.

Pappy (pæpi). A term used by negro children for *father*. It is, of course, a corruption of *papa*.

Pason (pæsn). Used to some extent by illiterate whites for *parson*.

Passle (pæsl). Used to some extent by all classes, but principally by the uneducated, to mean a *parcel*, not in the sense of a small bundle or a small quantity, but in that of a considerable number; as, "There was a whole *passle* of hogs in the yard"; i.e. there were a good many. The word has, perhaps, a somewhat larger meaning than a *good many*, but denotes less than a multitude. This word is used in Kentucky, but is becoming rare there.

Pastur (pastə). Illiterate white for *pasture*.

Patridge (pætrɪdʒ). A pronunciation of *partridge* common among negroes and illiterate whites. Dr. Brown notices *pätürge* with metathesis. I think the pronunciation in Mississippi is rather as given above.

Patter-rollers (pætə-rôləz). Negro for *patrols*.

Peckerwood. *Woodpecker*. Bartlett says that this word is Western. It is also heard very frequently in Mississippi, as in Tennessee.

Peerch (pɛrtʃ). Negro and illiterate white for *perch*, meaning a certain kind of fish. This forms an exact parallel to the use of *peert* for *pert*, which is common in almost all parts of the United States.

Per. The syllable *pro*, when the first in a word, is generally pronounced by negroes and illiterate whites as *per* (pě); e.g. *perfess*, *perfessor*, *perduce*, *perpose*, *pernounce*.

Perrairies (pər-êriz). Illiterate white for *prairies*.

Peruse (pər-uz). Used by negroes to mean *to wander about*; as, "Yistiddy I was perusin' around in de woods." *Peruse* and *bruze* seem to mean about the same thing. I can't find any difference in their use.

Peter out (pitə aut). *To fail, to give out*; used by all classes. Bartlett says that it is common in the Northern States as well.

Piddle (pidl). This word is marked in Webster as obsolete, and is said to be a different spelling of *peddle*, or from the same source, and to mean *to trifle*, or *deal in trifles*. It is still largely used in this sense by negroes and illiterate whites in Mississippi.

Pinder (pində). The common name for *peanut* in the southern and central portions of the State. The Century Dictionary says that *pinder* is of African origin.

Pint (paint). Negro and illiterate white for *point*.

Pizin (paizn). Negro for *poison*. This word is heard also in New England and Kentucky, but is becoming rare in those places. In the negro dialect of Mississippi it still holds undisputed sway.

Pleg (pleg). Common pronunciation of *plague*, especially in the expression, "Pleg take it!" a euphemistic form of swearing. The same pronunciation is used in Tennessee.

Po' (pô). Negro for *poor*.

Poke (pôk). This word is used by all classes to mean a slow person, and has its corresponding adjective *poky*. It is probably derived from the verb *to poke*, as meaning to feel or push one's way slowly. One who moves in this way is consequently called a *poke* or a *slow-poke*. *Poky* and *slow-poke* are heard in New England.

Poly (pôli). Negro for *poorly*, used to mean in a bad state of health. A negro, when asked about his health, if not well, will answer, "Poly, poly, bress God!"

Pone (pôn). Used by all classes for a certain kind of corn-bread made with only water, meal, and salt. The word *pone* frequently has a more extended meaning than this, and is used for a loaf of any kind of bread.

Pooty (puti). Negro and illiterate white for *pretty*.

Pore (pôə). Illiterate white for *poor*. This pronunciation, however, is used over almost the entire United States.

Po' skuse for (pô skyûs fə). A negro phrase meaning *a poor substitute for* or *example of*; as, "He is a mighty po' skuse for a man"; i.e. as a man, he is almost worthless.

'Possum (pos-m). A common contraction of *opossum*, used by all classes. This word is also used as a verb to signify *to feign*,

or *counterfeit*, probably from the opossum's habit of feigning death when any danger appears. Bartlett gives substantially this explanation.

Powerful (pauəful). The use of this word as an adverb meaning *very, exceedingly*, is pronounced vulgar by Webster; nevertheless it is used in Mississippi, with this sense, by a large number of well-educated people, I think, principally, by immigrants from South Carolina.

Po' white trash. The common name given by the negro to poor white people, whom he holds in utter scorn and detestation. Members of the colored race have frequently said to me: "Dem po' white trash don't know how to treat we niggers, and we all hates 'em like snakes."

Prar (præ). Illiterate white and negro pronunciation of *prayer*.

Presenty (presnti). Common negro word for *presently*.

Projicking (prodʒikin). A word used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *fooling, trifling*; as, "If you don't stop your projickin' with me, I'll lick you."

Purchase (pɜrtʃis). This word, in the sense of mechanical hold or power, is used somewhat peculiarly by the illiterate whites of Mississippi; for instance, if any one be paralyzed so as not to manage himself with ease, they say, "He hasn't got the proper purchase of himself."

Pursly or **Pussly** (pɜrsli or pɜsli). The common names for *purslane*. The Century Dictionary gives both of these words as vulgar, and as used in various parts of the Union.

Put down (put daun). Used by all classes to mean *to consider*; as, "I put him down for [or as] a fool."

Q.

Quare (kwær). Illiterate white for *queer*. This is exactly the same pronunciation as is used by the Irish.

Quarter (kwâte). This word, when used by itself, is generally understood, throughout the United States, to refer to a quarter of a dollar. The illiterate whites of Mississippi, however, use it to mean a quarter of a mile. They very rarely, indeed, say a quarter of a mile, but nearly always simply a quarter. They seem to think it necessary to say half of a mile, eighth of a mile, etc., but rarely ever quarter of a mile.

Quicked up (kwikt ɛp). I once heard an illiterate white inhabi-

tant of Lafayette County use this expression for *sudden, hastened*. He said, "You know his leaving was a quicked-up thing."

Quirl (kwërl). This word is largely used by negroes, and to some extent by white people, for *curl*. It is also thus used in New England. In Mississippi a snake is nearly always said to be *quirled* or *quoiled up*, instead of *curled* or *coiled up*. *Quiled* (kwaild) *up* is sometimes used by negroes.

R.

R. The pronunciation of the letter *r* is almost totally omitted in the middle of the word by all classes in Mississippi; e.g. (mønɪŋ) for *morning*; (ɔdə) for *order*; (môn) for *mourn*. Final *r* is also frequently unpronounced; as, (dô) for *door*; (flô) for *floor*; (mô) for *more*. Illiterate whites pronounce the *r* more distinctly than any other class, and negroes less distinctly.

Rap-jacket (ræp-dʒækɪt). A term used by all classes to mean a game of whipping, in which two boys are given switches, and whip each other with all of their might until one says "enough." They both thus have their jackets thoroughly rapped, if they happen to have on those garments. Two boys who have been fighting at school are very frequently punished by the teacher's making them play *rap-jacket* until he tells them to stop.

Rassle (ræsl). Negro and illiterate white for *wrestle*. This pronunciation of *wrestle* is, of course, a relic of *wrastle*, common in the fourteenth century. This is heard in New England, Canada, North Ireland, and Tennessee.

Razee (ræʒɪ). This word, in Mississippi, used occasionally by all classes, means to "Jew down" in a trade. A man is said to *raze* a merchant when he makes him lower his price by higgling.

Razoo (ræʒɪ). This word is common among negroes, and means *to totally disable*; but its origin is uncertain. By many negroes a razor is called a *razoo*, and this forms the favorite weapon of the colored man, so that this verb may have originally meant to cut with a razor; or, on the other hand, it may be connected with the well-known word *raze*.

Real down (rɪl daʊn). Used by cultivated whites to mean *exceedingly* or *extremely*. A thing that is extremely nice is said to be *real down* nice.

- Reckon** (rekn). This word is almost always used in the ordinary conversation of our best educated people for *think* or *suppose*, and corresponds to a like use of *guess* in the Northern States.
- Reddish** (redɪʃ). This pronunciation of *radish* is practically universal among the uneducated classes, and is frequently heard in the conversation of the more cultivated.
- Red-neck** (red-nek). A name applied by the better class of people to the poorer inhabitants of the rural districts. The word explains itself: men who work in the field, as a matter of course, generally have their skin burned red by the sun, and especially is this true of the back of their necks.
- Rickollection** (rikəl-ɪkʃ-n). Illiterate white for *recollection*, used to mean *memory*. An old hackwoodsman once said to me of a certain public man: "He has the most wonderful *rickollection* for remembering names that I ever hearn tell of."
- Rid** (rid). Negro for *rode*. This form has not very long been obsolete, and is derived from the old plural form of the past, or from the past participle.
- Right** (rait). Webster gives this word as meaning *actually*, *really*, *truly*; but in such expressions as *right good*, *right large*, it is used by Mississippians to mean *moderately*. This use is very frequent in the conversation of all classes of society.
- Right smart** (rait smat). Bartlett notices this as common in the South with the meaning of *a good deal*, *a considerable quantity or number*. In Mississippi it also means *worthy of consideration*; as, "He is *right smart* of a man"; i.e. a man who possesses considerable excellence in some line. The expression frequently occurs in *right smart chance*, *right smart sprinkle*, as noted by Bartlett.
- Rip and rare** (rip æn rær). This term is used by all classes of Mississippians as meaning *to create a violent disturbance*, especially by swearing and cursing. *Rar* (raə) is sometimes heard for *rare* among the negroes.
- Riz** (riz). Negro for *rose*, the past tense of *rise*. The form *riz* seems to be derived from the past participle *risen*, or the old past plural *rison*, most probably from the former. Used also in New England and Louisiana.
- Rookus** (rūkəs). A word signifying a quarrel or row. Used principally by negroes and illiterate whites, and occurring

most frequently in the southern central part of the State. Also heard in Kentucky.

Rozzum (roz-m or röz-m). Negro for *rosin*. Used also in Tennessee.

Rue back (rû bæk). Used by all classes to mean *to back out of a trade, to trade back*. When a man is not satisfied with a purchase, but returns it and gets his money back, he is said to *rue back*. *Rue back* applies also to a swap or any kind of a trade. Used also in Tennessee.

Rumatiz (rûmätiz). Negro and illiterate white for *rheumatism*. I think that this word is largely used outside of Mississippi.

S.

Sability (sêb·ilitiy). Used by negroes to mean *character, standing*; as, "I didn't think a gemman of your sability would do dat."

Saddy (sæddi). Illiterate white and negro for *Saturday*.

Sagashuate (sêg·æfyûêt). This word is used by negroes in the sentence: "How does your corporosity seem to sagashuate?" and is a common way of inquiring after anybody's health. *Corporosity* seems to refer to bodily condition, and I suppose is connected with the Latin *corpus*. *Sagashuate*, as far as I know, is not used outside of this or similar expressions, and here it would seem to mean *to thrive* or *prosper*.

Sager (sêdʒə). Illiterate white for backwoodsman, rustic. It is probably derived from *sedge* (pronounced sêdʒ), and refers to one coming from a sedge-grass region, i.e. from the country. Its use is confined almost exclusively to South Mississippi.

Sah (sa). Negro for *sir*.

Sarch (saatʃ). Negro and illiterate white for *search*.

Sarmint (saamint). Illiterate white for *sermon*. Negroes generally say *sarmun* (sarm-n).

Sartin (saatn). Negro for *certain*. This pronunciation is also used to some extent by the illiterate whites of Mississippi, as by those of almost every other part of the United States.

Sarvant (saavnt). Negro for *servant*.

Sarve (saav). Negro for *serve*.

Sass (sæs). Negro and illiterate white for *sauce*, meaning *impertinence, impudence*; and *sauce* itself Halliwell marks as low and vulgar. It comes, I presume, from *saucy*.

Sassy (sæsi). Negro and illiterate white for *saucy*.

Scaly-bark (skêli-bark). A name applied by all classes to a

species of hickory tree, as well as to the nuts that grow thereon. In other parts of the United States the terms *shell-bark* or *shag-bark* are used.

Scare (skeə). This pronunciation of *scare* is used by negroes and illiterate whites, and even by educated people sometimes. *Skered* is the ordinary past tense of this word, but negroes sometimes say *sked*.

Scasely (skēsli). Negro for *scarcely*. In "Dialect Notes," Professor Hart says of this: "Usually regarded as an Americanism. But cf. 'they themselves could skaselye enter without iepardie,' More's 'Utopia,' translated by Ralph Robinson, p. 73, Arber's Reprint."

School-butter (skûl-betə). This word, when yelled out by one school-boy to another, is regarded as the direst insult and as calling for immediate fight. Used also in Kentucky.

Scussion (skɛʃ-n). Negro for *excursion*.

Sech (setʃ). Negro for *such*. Precisely the same pronunciation is sometimes used by negroes for *search*.

Seed (sîd). Negro and illiterate white for *saw*.

Seeker (sikə). This word is used without modifiers of any sort to mean a penitent, one who is sorry for sin and desires to become religious. This specific meaning is, of course, easily traceable from the general meaning of the word, as a penitent is indeed a *seeker*, and has the right to be called pre-eminently *the seeker*; for he seeks after the most important of all things.

Seen (sîn). Used for *saw* by negroes and illiterate whites, forming another instance of the confusion of the past tense and past participle. The verb *see* is strangely distorted by the uneducated of Mississippi; they use *seen* and *seed* for *saw*; *seed* for *seen*; *saw* for *seen*; and, sometimes, *see* for *saw*.

Seppin (sepn). Negro for *except*. This word occurs often in the phrase, *seppin I slip*, which means *unless I fail* or *make a mistake*. A negro would say: "I'll git my cotton hoed over by Saddy, seppin I slip." Of course, this may be a form of *excepting*.

Shank of the evening. Used principally by negroes, meaning near the end of the evening. The Century Dictionary quotes this expression from "Uncle Remus's" stories, and says that *shank* means the end or close of anything.

Sheep-sorrel. This plant has many names in Mississippi, all of which are very common. It is called *sheep-shaw* (ʃip-ʃə),

sheep-shire (ʃip-ʃaɪə), *sheep-sheer* (ʃip-ʃiə), *sheep-shy* (ʃip-ʃai); but the correct name, *sheep-sorrel*, is rarely heard.

Shet (ʃet). Negro for *shut*.

Shindig (ʃindig). This word is used by illiterate whites, and means a country dance or party. Bartlett says that in the South it means "a blow on the shins," and in the West, "a dance of any kind." I have never heard it used in Mississippi to mean a blow on the shins, and that is certainly not the common meaning here.

This name for a dance could easily be derived from the motion of the legs in performing some dances; the dancers seem to be literally digging into the floor with their shins. This, however, is merely conjectural.

Sho (ʃô). The common negro pronunciation for *sure*. *Sholy* is likewise used for *surely*. *Sho* is sometimes used for *surely*. *Shore* for *sure* is also common here, as in Louisiana.

Sho as a cow. An expression used by illiterate whites to mean *perfectly certain*, *absolutely sure*. I cannot account for this phrase, as I know of no impression prevalent that a cow is any more sure than any other animal. *Sho as you are born*, *Sho as you are an inch [or foot] high*, *Sho as I am alive*, are expressions with substantially the same meaning.

Sho nuff (ʃô nəf). Negro for *sure enough*, meaning *real*; as, "Dat was sutenly a *sho nuff* ghos' I seed last night."

Shoot craps (ʃût kræps). The term used by negroes for the playing of a certain game of dice. This *craps*, however, I think has no connection with the negro word *crap* for *crop*.

Shucks (ʃɛks). An exclamation indicative of scorn or contempt. As the husks of corn are the most worthless part, the saying arose, "That is not worth shucks"; i.e. not worth anything. The single word *shucks* has now come to mean that the speaker's opinion of what has been said is that it is worthless or improbable. This word is used by all classes. *Shukins* (ʃɛkins) is a form of this word frequently met with.

Shuk (ʃɛk). Negro for *shook*.

Shuw (ʃɛ). An exclamation commonly used for *pshaw* by all classes.

Sistern (sistar-n). Negro for *sisters* (in a church), formed upon analogy with *brethren*.

Sit (sit). Often confounded with its causative, *set*, by even the

best educated people. *Sit* is also very frequently used for *sat* by all classes; *set* is also used for *sat*.

Skeet (skît). Illiterate whites use this word to mean *to move swiftly, to flee, to run*, and also *to skate*; and from this last it is probably derived. *Skeet* is probably merely another form for *skite*, given by Bartlett as meaning *to go about*; however, I have never heard *skite* used in Mississippi.

Skeeter (skîtə). Negro for *mosquito*.

Sketch over (sketʃ òvə). Illiterate white for *glance over*. They sketch over a newspaper before reading it closely.

Skuze (skyûz). Negro for *excuse* and *accuse*; as, "*Skuse* me for hittin' you, but you *skused* me of lyin'."

Skwel (skwel). Negro pronunciation of *squirrel*. I have known one or two very well educated immigrants from Virginia who used exactly this pronunciation.

Slab-sided (slæb-saided). Bartlett gives this word as meaning *having perpendicular sides, wall-sided*; but in Mississippi it is used by all classes to mean *crooked, cranky*. He is a *slab-sided man*, means that mentally, morally, or physically he is not as he should be, he is deficient in some way — he is not straight. This meaning may have come to this word from its having been confused with *crank-sided*.

Slick (slik). Used by all classes for *sleek*, and identical with the Old English *slick*. It is used by English settlers in Louisiana, and is heard also in New England.

Slicker (slikə). The common name for a certain kind of water-proof garment. It is also frequently used in the Rocky Mountain country.

Sling-shot (sliŋ-ʃot). A name in general use for an apparatus, generally called *catapult*, made of a wooden or iron staff, two bands of India-rubber, and a piece of leather, so connected as to be able to throw shot or pebbles to a considerable distance. Other names for this contrivance are *nigger-shooter* and *pea-shooter*: the first referring to the object shot at, and the second to the object hurled from the sling.

Slish (slaif). Quite a common pronunciation of *slice* by negroes and illiterate whites.

Smack (smæk). Used by all classes to mean *entirely, exactly, or precisely*; e.g. "He knocked him smack down," "He hit me smack in the face," "I ran smack up against it."

Smidget (smidʒit). Used by negroes to mean a small part or

portion of anything; as, "I just got a *smidget* of supper"; "I want a *smidget* of corn." This is probably allied to *midget*.

Smooove (smûv). Negro for *smoothe*. See p. 25.

Snake-doctor. The ordinary Mississippi name for the dragon-fly. Bartlett gives this as the common Southwestern name for dragon-fly. The two bumps sometimes seen on the snake-doctor, just behind his wings, are called his saddle-bags, and in them he is reputed to carry medicine for the snakes.

Snooks (snuks). This word is used by all classes to mean *equal shares*. Men *go snooks* with a certain amount of valuables when they divide them equally. Bartlett gives this word, spelled *snucks*, but meaning the same thing. He does not say how the word is pronounced, but the logical inference is that the *u* is pronounced as in *shucks*; whereas the *oo* in *snooks* is pronounced as *oo* in *took*.

This doubtless originated from *snacks*, meaning equal shares, as *to go snacks*, in the time of Pope, meant exactly what *to go snooks* means now. In Pope's poem about the bores that trouble him at Twickenham, occurs the following line:—

"At last he whispers, 'Do,' and we go snacks."

Snoot (snût). Negro and illiterate white for *snout*. This occurs also in New York City and Philadelphia, and very frequently is used to mean *nose*.

The Germans of Pennsylvania use this word to mean not only *nose*, but even *face*, sometimes calling a barber a *snoôt-scrafer*.

So long (sôl-ŋ). Used by all classes as a form of leave-taking. Century Dictionary says that it is probably a sailor's corruption of *salaam*.

Sont (sont). Negro for *sent*.

Sooley (su-i). The sound used to drive hogs out of one's way. Probably from *sowey* (sau-i), after the analogy of *scat* (skæt), the well-known word used to drive cats away.

Soople (sûp-l). Used for *supple*, principally by negroes and illiterate whites, but sometimes by educated people. It is used also in Louisiana and New England, and by uneducated people in the North of Ireland.

- Sop** (sop). Illiterate white for *molasses*, *gravy*, or anything in which bread is *sopped*. This class of people in Mississippi have changed the meaning of *sop* from the piece of bread to that in which the bread is dipped.
- Sorter** (sotə). Largely used by all classes. It is a corruption of *sort of*, and means *to some extent, moderately*; as, *sorter good, sorter bad*—moderately good or bad. *Kinder* (kaində), for *kind of*, has about the same meaning, but is not so commonly used. *Sorter* and *kinder* are used in many other parts of the United States.
- Sot** (sot). Negro for *set* or *sat*. According to Bartlett, this pronunciation is common among the illiterate of other States also.
- Soxdologer** (soksdolədʒə). A friend of mine, who is a minister, informs me that he has heard illiterate whites use this word for *doxology*.
- Sparking** (sparking). Courting. Bartlett says that this word is very common in the Northern States. And it is possible that the Mississippians may have taken it from Northern immigrants.
- Sparrow-grass** (spærə-græs). Negro for *asparagus*. According to Bartlett, used both in England and America.
- Speck** (spec). Used by negroes for both *expect* and *suspect*.
- Speerit** (spîrit). Illiterate white for *spirit*. They say also *speeritual* for *spiritual*.
- Spell** (spel). By negroes and some white people this word is used to mean *to signify, to amount to*; as in "What does that *spell*?" by which they mean, "What does that amount to?"
- Sperrit** (sperit). Negro for *spirit*. Negroes rarely ever say *speerit*, although illiterate whites use both *sperrit* and *speerit*. *Sperrit* is heard also in Louisiana and New England.
- Speunce** (spîuns). Negro for *experience*, both the noun and the verb. The past tense of the verb is *speunced*.
- Sprankle** (spræŋkl). I once heard an uneducated white man use this for *sprinkle*.
- Spurrer** (sperə). Illiterate white for *spurt*. They say, "Cotton has taken a *spurrer* in price"; i.e. a sudden rise.
- Squinch-owl** (skwintʃ-aul). Negro for *screech-owl*.
- Stairs** (stæəz). Illiterate whites frequently thus pronounce *stars*.
- Stakes** (stêks). In playing ring-men, a player is said to have

stakes when he has knocked three marbles out of the ring.

Step off (step of). Used by all classes for *marry*; as, "I think he will *step off* next fall." This may probably come under the head of slang.

Stob (stob). Negro pronunciation of the verb *stab*. As a noun, identically the same word is used, both in Tennessee and Mississippi, to mean a *stake* driven in the ground or the *tall stump of a tree*.

Stocky (stoki). Used by all classes, to some extent, to mean *firm* or *stout*. A low, chunky man is said to be *stocky*.

Stomp (stomp). Bartlett says that this pronunciation is almost universal in the United States: it certainly is in Mississippi, even among the best-educated people. Used also very frequently in Louisiana.

'Stracted (strækted). A contraction for *distracted*, much used by the negroes to mean *crazy*; as, "Dis hade-ache is mos' run me '*stracted*."

Straight-up-and-dicular. Sometimes used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *perpendicular*.

Straightway. Used by illiterate whites as equivalent to *in a straight line*. It plays a large part in back-country arguments on baptism, on account of its use in the Bible in the following sentence: "And came up straightway from the water." These uneducated people construe the sentence as meaning that the biblical characters were down in the water and came up out of it in a straight line.

Stumps (stumps). The phrase *in a bad row of* [or *for*] *stumps*, meaning in an unfortunate plight, is used by all classes. It is probably derived from ploughing in *new ground*, where stumps are sometimes very troublesome. Used also in Kentucky.

'Sturb (stëb). Negro for *disturb*. This is an example of a large number of verbs that have the first syllable left off by the negroes of Mississippi.

Such of a thing. This expression is used by all classes nearly always in the sentence: "It is no such of a thing"; i.e. it is not true. As *such* means *of that kind*, the *of* between *such* and *thing* may be introduced from the idea expressed in saying, it is not that kind of [a] thing, or not a thing of that kind.

- Sugar-game.** Used in Kentucky to mean the deciding game in playing marbles. In Mississippi its application is much more general. It means the deciding game in almost any sport, as base-ball, tennis, cards, checkers, chess, etc.
- Summons.** Used as a verb even by educated people; as, "He was *summonsed* before the court."
- Sumpen** (sɛmpu). Used by all classes, to a very large extent, for *something*.
- Sumpener** (sɛmp-nɛ). Negro and illiterate white for *something or other*.
- Suspicion.** *To suspect*. Used by whites, educated and uneducated, to a considerable extent. Negroes say 'spicion (spɪʃ-n). Bartlett says that this use of *suspicion* is common in the South. It is used also in the West.
- Sut** (sɛt). The ordinary pronunciation of *soot*. This is heard also in South Carolina and Tennessee.
- Suvigrous** (səvaɪgrəs). A negro word meaning *fierce, savage*; sometimes shortened to *vigrous* (vaɪgrəs), or *vigous* (vaɪgəs).
- Swanny** (swani). Illiterate white euphemism for *swear*. Bartlett says *I swan* is used as a euphemism in New England for *I swear*. The form *I swanny* is not used for *I swear* in the regular construction, "I swear that this is true"; but only as an expletive in such sentences as, "I swanny! if that ain't so!"

T.

- Tacky** (tæki). Used by all classes for *unfashionable* or *untidy*. It has a corresponding substantive *tack*, which means an unfashionable or untidy person.
- The word *tacky* is not at all confined to Mississippi, but is heard in almost every part of the Union. I think *tack* is not used so largely.
- Tailer** (têlə). Dr. Brown says, that in Tennessee, a boy is said to *tailer* another when the first wins seven games of marbles to the second's none. The word for this in Mississippi is *tail* (têl), a shortened form, I suppose, for *tailer*. A curious coincidence is the employment by Germans of *Schneider* in exactly the same sense.
- Take a drink.** This is expressed in various interesting and amusing ways, some of which are the following: to smile; to lubricate; to brace up; to bolster up; to swallow; to wet one's whistle. This last, Webster marks as colloquial. It is

used, I think, in all parts of the United States, and probably in England.

Take in. Universally employed for *begin* in reference to schools, and sometimes, in reference to church. In Charleston, S.C., *take in* means to begin, and *take out*, to end, when school or church is spoken of. In Mississippi, *turn out* is used for this *take out*.

Taken. An instance of the past participle used for the past tense *took*.

Tar (ta). Negro for *tear* (verb). See p. 42.

Tarrier (tæri-ə). Negro for *terrier*.

Tarrify (tærifai). Negro for *terrify*.

Tarrypin (tæripin). Negro for *terrapiin*.

Taters or Tates (têtəs or têts). The common names for *potatoes*, used by negroes and illiterate whites.

Taussle (tɔsl). The ordinary pronunciation of *tassel*. Heard also in Louisiana. *Tossel* (tosl) is used in New England.

Ter (tɐ). Negro for *the other*.

Terreckly (tærekli). Negro for *directly*.

Tetchous (tɛtʃəs). Common among negroes and illiterate whites for *tetchy*. Used also in Kentucky.

Th. *Th* is in a large number of instances pronounced by negroes as *d*; as, *dis*, *dāt*, *dése*, *dose*, *dere*, *dén*, *de*, *dán*, *děir* for *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, *there*, *then*, *the*, *than*, *their*. It seems that *th* has this pronunciation when it should have its soft, flat, or vocal sound (ð).

When *th* (p) has the sharp or whispered sound, it is quite frequently pronounced as *t*; as, *tought* for *thought*; *tink* for *think*; *tousand* for *thousand*; *troo* for *through*. This *th* (p), however, is not by any means always pronounced as *t*; as the negroes pronounce it correctly in *thrash*, *thrush*, *thumb*, *thunder*, and in a large number of other words.

When *th* (p) is final, it is generally given the sound of *f*; as, *toof* for *tooth*; *bref* for *breath*; *truf* for *truth*. When *th* (ð) is final, it has the sound of *v*; as, *breave* for *breathe*; *smoove* for *smooth*.

That's accordin'. Used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean *that depends*, and is probably an abbreviation of "that is according to how you look at it"; as, "Is that a good horse?" — "Well, *that's accordin'*"; i.e. that depends upon what you mean by a good horse. The phrase would imply that the

horse is not good in every respect; from some standpoints he is good, while from others he is not.

Theologer (piðlɔgə). Illiterate white for *theologian*.

There (ðēr). *Thar*, *dar*, and *dere* are used for *there*. *Thar* is used mostly by illiterate whites; *dar* and *dere*, by negroes.

Thing-em-a-doodle (p'ɛŋ-ə-mə-d'udl). Used by all classes for the name of anything that cannot be readily recalled. In Kentucky are used *thing-um-a-bob*, *thing-em-a-dudgeon*, *thing-doodle*. In New England, *thingembob*, *thingamy*, *thingemajig*, and in Massachusetts also *thigamy*, occur. *Thingemajig* and *thingemadoo* are sometimes heard in Mississippi.

This er way and **That er way** (ðis ə wê and ðæt ə wê). The phrases in this form are used by a large number of well-educated people. They are, of course, shortened forms of *this here way* and *that there way*. The *here* and *there* are added, I suppose, for emphasis. The forms of these two phrases are various among the other classes of society; illiterate whites say, "this ere way," "this air way," "that ere way," "that air way." Negroes say "dis ar way," "dat ar way." Negroes and illiterate whites use almost any substantive after these corruptions of *here* and *there* with *this* and *that*; while the educated classes rarely use any word except *way* in this connection.

Bartlett says that *this here* and *that there* is a common vulgarism in the United States and that *this yere* is the ordinary pronunciation in the South. The pronunciation *this yere* is heard frequently in Mississippi.

Thoo (pû). Negro for *through*.

Thote (pôt). Negro for *throat*.

Thout (ðaut). Negro for *without*.

Thow (pô). Negro for *throw*. The past tense of this verb in negro parlance is *thowed* (pôd). These words are used also in Kentucky.

Thrash (præf). This pronunciation is used by all classes both when speaking of threshing grain and of whipping anything. It is also thus used in western New York. In England and New England, *thrash* means to whip; *thresh*, to thresh grain.

Thunk (pɛŋk). Negro for *thought*. This past is formed upon analogy with such words as *sink*, *slink*, etc.

Thurst (pêrst). Used by some illiterate whites for *thrust*.

Tief (tif). Negro for *thief*.

Til (til). Negro for *to*, used with reference to place. In this we may have the survival of Old English *til*. *Til* or *till* has another peculiar use in the negro dialect in sentences like the following, where it is used in the place of *that*: "It hurt me so till I cried." I think that this use of *till* has sprung from the confusion of two constructions: "It hurt me so that I cried," and "It hurt me until [or till] I cried," where *till* or *until* is employed to denote consequence or result.

Time to hang up. Used by all classes for *time to quit work*. Its origin seems somewhat doubtful. Bartlett gives the phrase, "to hang up one's fiddle," and quotes from "The Sayings of Sam Slick": "When a man loses his temper and ain't cool, he might as well *hang up his fiddle*." *Time to hang up* may, of course, be connected with what has just been quoted, or it may be derived from the custom of hanging up one's tools when work is stopped.

Tiptoe-heading (tiptô-hedin). Used by the negroes of the Mississippi bottom to mean, *in an over-bearing way*; as, "Don't you come a tiptoe-heading towards me."

Toch (totʃ). Negro for *touch*. *Tech* (tetʃ) is also used for *touch* by negroes. *Toch* sometimes forms a regular past tense, *toched*, and sometimes is itself used as past.

To death. This phrase is largely used by all classes to mean *excessively, exceedingly*; as, "I am tired to death"; "I nearly laughed myself to death."

Tominated (tominêted). Illiterate white for *contaminated*. I once heard an old rustic say that he was formerly *tominated* with sin, but had afterwards become sanctified.

Tote (tôt). The common negro word for *carry*.

Tote the mail. A negro expression for *run swiftly*; as, "When I seed dat ghos', I farly toted de mail." This may be regarded as an indirect compliment to Uncle Sam, since his method of carrying the mail has become the synonym for swiftness.

Tother (təðə). Negro and illiterate white for *the other*.

Towser (tausə). This word is used in South Mississippi to mean *a hail fellow well met*, and is always put before a proper name; as, Towser Jim, etc.

Trawft (trəft). Negro and illiterate white for *trough*.

Tromp (trəmp). Common pronunciation of *tramp* (verb). Used also in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Trussle (tresl). Largely used by all classes for *trestle*.

Tuck (tek). Negro for *took*.

Tuh (tɛ). There is no sound of *r* in the negro pronunciation of *to*, and it should not be written *ter*, as it generally is by dialect writers.

Turkle (tɛrkl). Negro for *turtle*. *Turkle-dove* is the common name given by negroes to the *turtle-dove*.

Turn (tɛrn). This word is used by all classes to mean that portion of anything which constitutes a load for a man; e.g. as much corn as a man can carry is a *turn* of corn. We speak likewise of a *turn* of wood or a *turn* of brick, or of almost anything that can be carried by a man.

Turn-row (tɛrn-rô). A word employed by farmers to mean the row in the middle of the field, where the dirt is begun to be thrown in a direction opposite to that in which it had been thrown before, so as to form a deep furrow or trench.

Turrible (tɛrib-l). A pronunciation of *terrible* very common among the illiterate, and sometimes heard in the conversation of the educated.

Twel (twel). Negro for *till*.

Twiste (twaist). Negro and illiterate white for *twice*. This vulgarity is, I think, very common in many parts of the United States.

U.

Uh (ɛ). The common negro form for the indefinite article *a*. This is generally written *er* by dialect writers, but no sound of *r* is ever apparent in the negro pronunciation.

Umbarel (ɛmbərel). Negro and illiterate white for *umbrella*.

'Umble (ɛmb-l). Used for *humble* by all classes. Not one man in a thousand, in Mississippi, pronounces *humble* correctly, but nearly all make the *h* silent.

Underskirt. The common name for *petticoat*, corresponding to the *under-coat* of North Carolina.

Under the weather. A phrase used by all classes to mean *unwell*, *not in good health*. One not in good health is naturally more under, or subject to, the weather than one perfectly well.

Uv (ɛv). Negro and illiterate white pronunciation of *of*.

V.

V. A final *v* is generally pronounced as *b* by negroes; as, *lub* (lɛb) for *love*; *gib* (gib) for *give*; *sab* (sɛb) for *save*, etc. This, however, is not always the case, and it seems impossible to give any rule that is followed.

Vamoose (vəm-ûs). Bartlett gives *vamose* as colloquial in the United States, and as heard especially frequently in the Southwest. However, the common form of this word in Mississippi is *vamoose*, having exactly the same meaning as *vamose*, and being used by all classes.

Varus (vêrəs). Illiterate white for *at variance with*; used in the eastern central portion of the State. When two men do not agree, they are then said to be *varus* with each other.

Venture. In a game of marbles this word means *to forbid*; as, "venture roundance"; "venture dubs"; etc. In Cincinnati *fen* is used with this meaning, and may possibly be derived from *venture*. *Venture* itself is most probably (*pre*)*vent you*, the first syllable of *prevent* being left off.

Verse. All classes of people sometimes use *verse* of poetry for *stanza*. This, however, is an error by no means confined to Mississippi.

Very. The generally accepted meaning of *very* is *exceedingly, to a great degree*; but Mississippians frequently use it in exactly the opposite sense. In spoken discourse the meaning of *very* depends entirely upon the tone in which it is uttered. If the *very* is pronounced quickly without any special stress, it means *to a small extent, to a very moderate degree*. Thus, sometimes, when a thing is said to be *very good*, it is meant that the thing is *moderately good, or not so good after all*; e.g. if some one were asked whether a dog is a good one or not, and should reply, "Well, he is very good," it would in all probability be meant that the dog was not entirely good, but that he had some good qualities.

When the necessity arises for using *very* in its emphasizing or intensifying sense, Mississippians nearly always employ some other term, a few of which I shall give: *real, real down, mighty, quite, tarnation, awful, uncommon, monstous, rattling*; all of which are used as adverbs when taking the place of *very*.

Of course all of these expressions are not peculiar to Mississippi, but all of them are extensively used here.

W.

Wade into. One man is said to *wade into* another when he attacks him very vigorously with either fist or tongue. This phrase is used by all classes.

Want (wənt). Negro and illiterate white for *was not* or *were not*.

Wa nut (wənət). Negro for *walnut*. Used also in Kentucky and New England.

Waat (wəst). Negro for *wasp*.

Wat (wet). Sometimes used by negroes for *what*.

We all's. A possessive form of *we all* used by negroes and illiterate whites. *You all's* also is heard. "That house is *we all's*" means that the house belongs to all of us.

Weepons (wipənz). Negro and illiterate white for *weapons*. Used also in Kentucky.

Well. Bartlett gives a lengthy note on this word, but I do not think he brings out a peculiar way in which it is used in Mississippi. I refer to that use of *well* which denotes that the one who says *well* is not satisfied with what has been spoken, but that he expects something more, or that granting what has been said, to be true, he desires to know what follows as a logical inference—a meaning that may be made clear by the following dialogue:—

Mr. Jones.—"The weather is bad, cotton is low, my wife is sick."

Mr. Smith. "Well?" Here Mr. Smith desires to know what Mr. Jones is going to do under the circumstances; he wants to know what is going to follow; he expects Mr. Jones to make some additional statement.

Wen (wen). Sometimes used by illiterate whites and negroes for *when*.

We uns (wi ənz). Illiterate white for *we*. *You uns* is also used for *you*. Bartlett says that these were developed during the late war. Their use extends over almost the whole Union. I suppose these were originally *we ones* and *you ones*.

Whar (hwar). Is used by illiterate whites to mean both *where* and *whether*. They say: "I don't know *whar* he went or *whar* he has come back or not."

What may be your entitlements? Frequently used by illiterate whites for "what is your name?"

Wheel-borrow (hwil-borə). Illiterate white and negro for *wheelbarrow*.

Which from tother (hwitʃ frəm təðə). Illiterate white for *one from another*. It is frequently said of twins that one can't tell "which from tother."

Whing (hwêŋ). Used by illiterate white immigrants from North Carolina for *wing*.

Who laid the rails. An expression used by negroes without any very definite meaning. It generally occurs in such constructions as the following: "Dat man kin speak fum who laid the rails"; "He gimme a beatin' fum who laid the rails." As can be seen from these examples the expression generally implies some degree of excellence or completeness.

Whup (hwup). Negro for *whip*. Used also in Kentucky.

Widow-woman. Negroes and illiterate whites almost never say simply *widow*, but in nearly every instance add either *woman* or *lady* to this word. Cultivated white people very frequently use this redundancy also.

Wirsted (wirsted). Used by some illiterate whites for *worsted*, meaning a kind of cloth.

Wouldn't be surprised if it didn't. This expression is frequently used by all classes in the place of *wouldn't be surprised if it did*; as in speaking of the weather, one says: "I wouldn't be surprised if it didn't rain," meaning that he thinks it is going to rain.

Wrench (rentf). This word is used by illiterate whites of some sections to mean a *wash* or *bath*. As a verb it is used by all classes for *rinse*. In the latter sense it is used in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. The New England form is *rense*.

Writ (rit). Used by negroes for *wrote*. This is a preservation of a form in the best usage as late as a century or two ago, and is derived from the old past plural *writon*.

Wunst (wunst). Negro and illiterate white for *once*.

Wush (wuf). Negroes and illiterate whites use both this form and *wusht* for *wish*; for *wished* they nearly always say *wusht*. Even educated people frequently say *wisht* for *wish*.

Wusser (wəsə). A double comparative form used by negroes for *worser*, which is itself, of course, formed from *worse*. *Wuss* is also used to mean the same thing, but sometimes it indicates a less degree than *wusser*; as, "John is *wuss* than Jim, but Bill is *wusser* still." The superlative form is *wust*.

Y.

Yaas (yæs). The almost universal pronunciation of *yes*. *Yep* (yep) and *yea* (ye-ə) are also very commonly used for *yes*.

Yarb (yarb). Negro for *herb*. Bartlett gives *yerb* as the common

pronunciation of *herb* in the South, but *yarb* is certainly more frequently heard among the negroes of Mississippi. By tolerably well-educated people *herb* is frequently pronounced as if the *h* were silent.

Year (ye-ə). The common pronunciation of *ear* among the uneducated; also used to some extent by educated people.

Yearth (yērp). Negro and illiterate white for *earth*. Bartlett gives the word *yeath* as the form used in the South in general; but, however that may be, *yearth* is certainly more common in Mississippi, although the other pronunciation is sometimes heard.

Yistiddy (yist-idi). Negro and illiterate white for *yesterday*.

Yo (yô). Negro and illiterate white for *ewe*. Used also in Louisiana.

Yore (yô-ə). The almost universal pronunciation of *your*.

You-ker-bet-you (yûkəbɛtʃu). Negro for *you may bet; for sure*.

I do not know the origin of the expression. F. O. C. O.

Yourn (yôrn). *Yourn*, *ourn*, *hîsn*, *hern*, *theîrn*, are all used by negroes and illiterate whites for the regular possessive forms *yours*, *ours*, etc. *Yourn*, *ourn*, etc., seem to be contractions for *your own*, *our own*, etc.

Yur (yɛ-ə). A pronunciation of *here* sometimes used by negroes.

Z.

Zackly (zækli). Negro for *exactly*.

Zune (zûn). This is an onomatopoetic word much used by negroes and illiterate whites, and sometimes by educated people. A bee is said to go *zuning* through the air; a fly is said to *zune* against the window-pane; and, as rapid motion is necessary to *zuning*, a man, horse, locomotive, or almost anything that goes along swiftly, is said to *zune*, even though that peculiar *zuning* sound is not made by the object in its motion.

One negro asks another if the train ran fast, and the second answers, "She farly zuned." The word is thus sometimes used in exactly the same sense as *june*, and I think is allied to it; in fact, the two may be but different ways of representing the same sound.

SUPPLEMENT.



- All-overs** (əl ôvəz). A term employed by all classes to mean a *feeling of extreme annoyance or vexation*; as, "That man is so trifling it gives me the *all-overs* to look at him." I think that this expression is derived from some such sentence as this: "It annoys [or vexes] me all over [i.e. completely] to look at him."
- Aught** (ət). Very commonly used for *naught*.
- Backside of next week.** I heard an emigrant from England use this phrase in referring to the latter part of next week.
- Beatenest.** This word is used in Mississippi with exactly the same sense as in Kentucky; i.e. *not to be beaten, not to be surpassed*.
- Been had.** Very commonly used by negroes for *have had*. The expression *ain't been had* is probably more common than the affirmative form; as, "I ain't been had a chill sence I wuz a chile."
- Bit.** *To get bit* is used also in Mississippi to mean *to be cheated*.
- Bit.** In the sense of $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents this is very commonly used in Mississippi. A quarter of a dollar is nearly always called *two bits*; and a half of a dollar quite often, *four bits*; and seventy-five cents, *six bits*. The last is probably the most common of all.
- Booger** (bugə). This word is used in Mississippi to mean a *bug-bear, dried mucus in the nose, and a louse*. In all three senses it is a child's word. It is the unfortunate destiny of a large number of the negro nurses to have lice in their heads, and these are called *boogers* by the children. The word is used also, by illiterate whites, as a verb, meaning *to shy, to get slightly frightened*, and is said of a horse.

Bud or Bub (bəd, bəb). The word used in addressing an unknown small boy.

Calm. This word is often pronounced *kæm* even by well-educated people.

Cinch (sintʃ). "To get a cinch on" is very common in Mississippi for "To get a hold on," "To secure fast and tight."

Crazy as a bed-bug. This expression is often used for extreme lunacy or eccentricity. When a man's actions cannot be accounted for on any rational basis, it is said that he is "as crazy as a bed-bug." I do not know the origin of the phrase. In Germany they say, "As impudent as a bed-bug."

Cupola. Very commonly pronounced (kyûpəlô) by the illiterate. Bartlett's note on this, however, is very full.

Dare. In Mississippi *dare* and *double dog dare* are used by children in quarrelling. *Dog dare* and *double black dog dare* I have never heard.

Doodle-bugs. This word is in very common use in Mississippi as well as in Louisiana and Kentucky.

Doozer (dûzə). The hole made in a top by the spindle of another top. In the game of "pecking tops," it is the ambition of every boy to put the biggest *doozers* in the tops of his fellows.

Dry grins. This is used in Mississippi, as in Kentucky, to mean the "smiles of one teased."

Dubs (dəbz). In playing marbles, the player who knocks out two marbles at one time cries *dubs*, in order to have the right of keeping both marbles out of the ring. The Century Dictionary says that *dubs* is a contraction of *doublets*.

Frog-sticker. This is used in Kentucky for "a blunt-pointed Barlow pocket-knife"; but in Mississippi it is used as a disparaging name for any kind of pocket-knife. If one boy desires to insinuate that another's knife is not a good one, he refers to it as a *frog-sticker*.

Grease, greasy. In *grease*, used as a verb, the *s* is given the sound of *z*; in the adjective *greasy* the same rule holds good. In the noun *grease*, however, *s* has its proper sound.

Gump (gəmp). The Century Dictionary gives this word in the

sense in which it occurs in Mississippi as well as in Missouri—an idiot, a senseless person. Bartlett gives *gumptious* as meaning *smart, clever*. I have never heard the word *gumptious* used. In Mississippi *gumpy* is sometimes heard for *gump*.

Heeled. This word is used in Mississippi with the same meaning as in Kentucky—well-prepared or “well-fixed.” *Well-heeled* is the Massachusetts phrase. The word *heel* is also sometimes used in Mississippi to mean specially *to arm oneself*; as, “When he heard of the difficulty he went to *heel* himself.”

Hiding the switch (haidin switf). This game is played in Mississippi as well as in Kentucky.

Hi-spy (hai-spai). In Mississippi this name is applied to both out-door and in-door hide-and-go-seek. *I spy* is also used.

Horsler (hɔslə). In the game of ring-men, as it is played in Mississippi, it is the duty of the last man “killed” to put the marbles in the ring for the next game, and this person is called the *horsler*. This name is, I suppose, from *hostler*.

Howdy (haudy). This word is extensively used by the illiterate classes of Mississippi as a regular verb; as, “We just met and *howdied*, and then passed on.”

Hurricane. This word is pronounced by negroes and illiterate whites both (hæriken) and (heriken).

If nothing happens (ef nəpn hæpn3). This phrase is put by the negro after almost every expression of any future intention; as, “I’ll git froo plowin’, Saddy, ef nothin’ happens.” Of course the meaning is “if nothing happens to prevent.”

Janders (dʒændəz). A form of the word *jaundice*. The Century Dictionary gives *jaunders* as a dialectical form. This also is heard in Mississippi.

Jimmy-jawed (dʒimidʒəd). This expression is very common, and means having the lower jaw protruding beyond the upper.

King’s ex. or King’s excuse. Used in Mississippi as in Missouri for the purpose of stopping children’s games—as *tag* or *base*.

Knee high to a duck. This expression, used in Kentucky for "very short," is extremely common in Mississippi; but the similar expressions given by Bartlett are very rarely heard.

Knucks (nɛks). A game of marbles in which the defeated player must allow the other players to have one "plump" apiece at his knuckles from a distance of eight or ten feet. The word *knucks* is also cried out in a game of marbles in order to make the player who is shooting, keep his hand on the ground.

Leg or Lag (leg or læg). The word is pronounced in both ways indicated, and is used as an intransitive verb. It belongs to the vernacular of marble-players. In *legging* or *lagging* each player endeavors to so roll a marble as to make it stop on a horizontal line drawn about five or six feet from the players. This is the method generally adopted of determining who shall have the "first go" — the player whose "taw" stops nearest the line being entitled to that privilege.

The word may be, and probably is, connected with the verb *to lag*, meaning to fall behind, as the order in which the players shall shoot is determined by the distance that they fall behind one another.

Lessen (lesn). A word used by negroes and illiterate whites for *unless*. It may have originated from analogy with *seppen* for *except*, *offen* for *off*, *outen* for *out*.

Long sight. This expression always occurs in the phrase "by a long sight," which means "by a great deal"; as, "He is not a good man by a long sight."

Make-up. This in Mississippi, as in Kentucky, means planned or prepared beforehand, and occurs very frequently with the word *job*; as, "That was a made-up job"; i.e. something that had been thought about and planned before.

Mostest (môstɛs). A double superlative form in very common use by the negroes. Analogous words are *goodest*, *bestest*, *worstest*, in none of which is the final *t* sounded.

Much up. This expression is used by illiterate whites to mean *to pet*, *to make much of*. The Century Dictionary gives *much* used in this sense without the adverb, and quotes Halliwell as saying that *much* is provincial in England and the United

States. I have never heard *much* used in this sense unless followed by *up*.

Mud-dauber (mæd-dobə). A species of wasp. The Century Dictionary gives the word, but not the pronunciation indicated. It is somewhat peculiar that Mississippians should pronounce *au* as short *o* in this word, as they nearly always pronounce short *o* itself as *au*.

Muley cow (myûli). The word is used with the same meaning noted in the Century Dictionary and Bartlett. The pronunciation in Mississippi is as indicated.

Naked (nekid). In Mississippi, as in Kansas City, this word is very generally pronounced (nekid).

Nape (næp). In Mississippi, as in Kansas City, very generally pronounced (næp).

Organ. This word is used by the illiterate whites of Mississippi as a regular verb, meaning to play on the organ.

Plug (plæg). The Century Dictionary says that *plug* is used to refer to anything old or worn out so as to have become undesirable or unsalable. In this sense of valueless or ordinary, I have never heard the word in Mississippi applied to anything else than to a horse of ordinary breed. However, in this use it is very common both as a noun and as an adjective.

Psalm (sæm). This pronunciation is very common in Mississippi, even among educated people.

Purgatory. A name given to a game of marbles, which is played by rolling a marble in a series of holes, the last one in the series being called *purgatory*, or *purg*.

Raise sand. This expression is very common, meaning *to create a disturbance, to raise a row*. The Century Dictionary does not give *to raise sand*, but mentions the kindred expressions, *to raise the dust* and *to raise the land*. Both of these mean the same thing as *to raise sand*; but neither of them is used very extensively in Mississippi; in fact, I have never heard them at all.

Reesins (rîznz). The common pronunciation of *raisins* by negroes and illiterate whites.

Roundance. A term used in playing marbles. By crying out *roundance* the player obtains the right to move around to a more favorable position for shooting. I think that the word is merely an abstract noun formed from the adjective *round*.

Scrofulo (skrofyulô). Scrofula is very frequently so called by the uneducated.

Shoot and venture. A phrase used in playing marbles. One player tells another "to shoot and venture," when the second must shoot without making any change either in the position of his *taw* or of his opponent's; he is thus deprived of the rights of *roundance*, *clearance*, etc.

Sight unseen. This is a very common expression, and is always used in connection with buying or swapping. Two boys agree to trade knives *sight unseen*, meaning without either having seen the knife of the other.

Sis (sis). The word used in addressing an unknown small girl.

Skoot (skût). This word is used by all classes as a semi-slang expression, and means to move away rapidly, to leave in a hurry. It may possibly be akin to *skeet*.

Slacked (slækt). All classes use this pronunciation of *slaked*.

Smack-dab (smæk-dæb). A term used by all classes, but more especially by the uneducated, to mean *exactly*, *precisely*; as, "I hit him *smack-dab* in the face." *Smack* is sometimes used with the same meaning as the Century Dictionary notes.

Spit and image (spit æh imedʒ). A negro expression for an exact likeness; as, "He is the *spit and image* of his father." The expression sometimes appears as the *spit image*. The Century Dictionary gives *spit* as equivalent to *image*, but says nothing of the derivation of *spit*. It seems to me that *spit* is very probably derived from *spirit*, since the negro pronunciation of *r* is very indistinct; so the phrase must have originally been *spirit and image*.

Split the difference. This is a phrase in very common use by all classes, and has reference to buying and selling. If a buyer wishes to pay a certain amount for an article and the seller asks more, they are said to *split the difference* when the difference between the two prices is divided by two.

Squench (skwentʃ). A negro word for *quench*. The Century Dictionary says that here *s* is an intensive prefix. The word is sometimes pronounced (skwintʃ), which form is also used by negroes for *squint*.

Steeple (stip-1). *Staple*, the bent wire for holding in place the barbed wire on fences, is so pronounced by the illiterate.

Stinch (stintʃ). Negro for *stint*.

Stinger (stidʒə). The common negro and illiterate white pronunciation of *stingy*.

Stud'in' yu (stədin' yə). A very common negro phrase for *thinking about you*; as, "G'way fum hya, chile; I ain't stud'in' yu." The expression is of course a corruption of *studying you*.

Suke (sūk). The commonly used word for calling cows. The word *cow* is sometimes added to it, so as to make *sukow* (sūkau), the *u* being long drawn out in the pronunciation.

Summage (səmedʒ). Very often used by negroes for *summon*.

Sutenly (sətnli). Negro for *certainly*.

Surup (sərəp). *Syrup* is commonly so pronounced by all classes.

Taws (təʒ). The place from which the players shoot in the game of marbles called ring-men.

Tit (tit). The almost universal pronunciation of *teat* in Mississippi. Webster says that this is a common pronunciation, and that *teat* is sometimes written *tit*. In Mississippi, the diminutive *tittie* (titi) is more frequently heard than *tit*.

Togæther (təgæðə). Illiterate whites very frequently so pronounce *together*. In a number of exercises handed to me by my freshman English class, I have seen the word spelled *togather*.

Varmint (vaamint). This word is a corruption of *vermin*, and is used by negroes and illiterate whites to mean a predatory beast of any kind. The Century Dictionary gives the word as dialectical.

Wax (wæks). A word used to some extent by all classes to mean *to beat*, *to thresh*. The Century Dictionary gives the word with this meaning under its remarks on the noun *wax*, meaning a rage or passion.

Wear out (wæəaut). A word used by all classes as synonymous

with *whip* [•]*thoroughly*. The Century Dictionary gives as a meaning of to *wear out*, "to waste or consume the strength of," but it does not call attention to this specific way of consuming the strength of any one.

Whack up (hwæk ʔp). An expression employed by all classes, probably as semi-slang, to mean *to divide*, *to share*.

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